When Johnny came marching home . . .

Betty saw him first.
" He's here," she shouted
TO-NIGHT'S THE NIGHT FOR THE PARTY, O.K., MUMS?
And I was so pleased with myself for being prepared. You see I had...

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Happier holidays?

"LIKE A DIVIDEND to Britain's holiday resorts." "As valuable as a guaranteed six months' heat wave."

Thus, jubilantly, was the cut in the foreign travel allowance hailed by south coast hotel-keepers a little while ago.

Since then, travel agencies have exercised their ingenuity and resource, to some purpose, to show that it is possible to have an overseas holiday of moderate length and yet keep within the new allowance of £25. And no doubt a lot of people who had planned to go abroad will still be going.

But a great many will be staying at home, either of necessity or because they do not like the prospect of having very little spending money. How about them?

ARE the ingenuity and resource going to be left to those who cater for foreign travel?

Is the British tourist industry going to sit back and accept the "dividend" from stay-at-homes without making any special effort to give them value for money?

There never was a better chance for seaside and country resorts, hotel and boarding-house keepers, and others catering for the home holidaymaker not only to enjoy the temporary benefit of the return of currency restrictions, but to set about improving their own services and laying the foundations of a happier future.

The restrictions will not last for ever. In the long run, the future is far more important than the immediate situation which compels more people to think first of holidays at home.

THIS is what Mr. S. B. Till, of the Brighton Hotels Association, told the town's hotel-keepers: "I warn against any thoughts that the 'captive' tourists are going to like it. It will need to be demonstrated that a holiday here can more than compare with one abroad."

There is sound sense in that. The hotel-keepers, however, cannot do it all by themselves. Everyone concerned in the tourist trade will have to help, starting with the Government, which is more closely concerned than it sometimes admits.

WHATEVER economies may be necessary in other directions, the Chancellor and his colleague, the President of the Board of Trade, should do positive things to encourage and not dishearten the home holidaymaker. This means helping the hotels and boarding houses and holiday camps to provide better accommodation and better services. It means taking the brake off the purchase of the equipment urgently needed to refurnish and expand holiday premises. It means getting on with the amendment of the Catering Wages Act which, by its too rigid provisions, has made hotel service more and more difficult.

Any proposals which are really necessary for the improvement of family holidays should have the Government's sympathy.

FOR a start, what can be done about transport? Every holiday journey is a return journey. But the new railway return fares are double the single rates, saving nothing!

British Railways should offer a discount on a holiday return ticket. There ought to be far more cheap holiday excursion trains to the Scottish Highlands, the Welsh hills, the Lake District, and coast resorts which are now too expensive and difficult to reach.

COACHING firms should be helped to expand their fleets. For the sake of holiday services, they should be exempted from the restrictions of home supplies of new vehicles.

Private interests, too, can help the Better Holidays Crusade. It should be the business of every seaside and country resort to control the charges made for car-parking, ice-creams, toys, and pleasure - ground amusements. "Pleasure without profiteering" should be the resorts' slogan.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

A PUBLIC library is full of romance, and—as Kenneth John Petts's painting hints—it's not all found in books. Petts, who uses public libraries a lot to check details for his extremely popular illustrations to *John Bull* stories, saw this incident on one of his visits. His choice of title for the book that the girl is reading neatly clinches the situation. Readers may find equally apt titles themselves.

Russell Bradley's great true story of heroism "The Naked Island"

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FREE SPEECH

Good brains that are being wasted

FOREIGN WORKERS IN Britain are often given jobs for which they are least suited and, although they work with admirable efficiency and adaptability, no one seems to have thought that they may have ambitions, like everyone else. I am married to one of them. My husband was college-trained in Poland and qualified for a profession, but now, outside his present menial job, with no future, every door is closed to him. Foreign qualifications are, apparently, of no account in this country.

He is only one of many. What a waste of good brains!—FOREIGNER'S WIFE, Nelson, Lancs.

Women Played, Men Danced

DURING A YEAR spent in Borneo, I worked on a survey of Brunei Bay, the place so perfectly described in Harry Hopkins's articles (JOHN BULL, February 2-16). We came in contact with both sea and jungle dayaks, who invited us to visit their long houses. Their dances were peculiar. Women played the instruments and sang, while

the men danced in couples. This went on all night without a break. I enclose a snapshot of the chief headman of Brunei, holding the head of a Japanese. A British official shot the Jap and the headman beheaded him, so they came to an arrangement whereby each kept the head for six months of the year.—A. BAILEY, 14 Mess, H.M.S. *Mull of Kintyre*, Harwich, Essex.

Chat With The Russians

WILLIAM RICKITTS'S ARTICLES, quoting letters received from his Russian wife (JOHN BULL, February 9-23), give us a revealing glimpse of the Soviet mind. I remember, during the last war, when I had occasion to visit *Tambov* (the parent ship which sailed down the English Channel with the Russian trawlers in May, 1950), I tried to be friendly with the crew, as I speak a little Russian. So long as I played chess with the skipper and talked of the weather everything was fine. But even one question about hearth and home was met with silence. I simply could not win their confidence.—A. DAVEY, 71 Dairsie Road, London, S.E.9.

. . . Being a happily married woman myself, I read Rickitts's articles with sympathy, but was puzzled as to how his wife's letters had escaped the Russian censorship.—MRS. A. B. ASTON, 12 Bourne Street, Dudley, Worcs.

As explained in the first article, Rickitts's wife was allowed by the British Embassy in Moscow to send letters to him through the diplomatic bag. Some letters quoted in the final article were written after Rickitts's wife had been "kidnapped." These came through the ordinary mail.

No Refuge For The Pram

EVERY DAY I have to cross three roads, with a pram, at a large, light-controlled junction where five roads converge. This means that I must always wait at the refuge in the centre of the road, but these refuges consist of two small stone blocks, where people can stand with safety, but a pram cannot. With traffic hurtling along fore and aft I am faced with the choice of risking having the front of the pram hit or being sheared from behind. Cannot we have a means of getting prams across roads without these hairbreadth escapes?—MRS. D. F. LEWIS, 78 Caerleon Road, Newport, Mon.

Baffling The Diner

THE REASON WHY most restaurant menus are written in French is to instil an inferiority complex in the customer. It

is a cunning psychological move to baffle, and stifle complaints.—W. HUDSON, 29 Leighton Gardens, London, N.W.10.

The Presses Were Stopped

AS A REGULAR READER I am surprised that you have not printed an explanation of how an Editorial discussing King George VI's projected visit to Africa came to appear in the issue dated February 16, published a week after His Majesty's death.—D. H. L. WAINWRIGHT, Birmingham.

The Editor greatly regrets that it was impossible to stop the distribution of some advance copies of the February 16 issue, which had already been printed when the King's death was announced. As soon as the news was received the presses running the issue were stopped, so that the Editorial referring to the African visit could be removed. An appropriate expression of our sorrow at the nation's grievous loss and an expression of sympathy for the Royal Family in their bereavement was immediately substituted. The great majority of the copies finally distributed contained the substituted comment.

Unfair Both Ways

YOUR AMERICAN CORRESPONDENT, Mrs. Van Doren, rightly complains ("Free Speech," February 16) that the British Customs are unfair in charging duty on gift parcels from the U.S.A. But, unfortunately, the American Customs are equally unreasonable in charging duty on gifts sent from Britain to relatives and friends in the United States.—P. G. MCVEIGH, 21 Causewayside, Edinburgh.

Forgotten Jap Crimes

I WAS A PRISONER of the Japanese for three years after the fall of Singapore. For those who never experienced Jap imprisonment, Russell Braddon's story, *The Naked Island*, may seem horrifying beyond belief, but the bestialities he describes are no more than the truth. The enormity of the Japanese crime has been forgotten too easily and, harrowing though it may be to read of such brutalities, this is a story which should be read by everyone, for the sake of the men who lived through such horrors and of those who never came back. Many of the friends I made in prison camps died in Jap hands, some of them on the Thailand railway, on which I worked myself. Braddon's story is a fitting memorial to them and a needed stimulus to all of us never to forget.—Ex-P.O.W., Birmingham.

This week's instalment of "The Naked Island" begins on page 10.

Bodies Before Souls

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT seems to be thought more important than spiritual education in our schools. There are three P.T. masters at my school, but no Divinity master. Nor is there a syllabus for Divinity. Masters just chatter on any and every subject during the one weekly Divinity lesson.—SCHOOLBOY, Leicester.

Playing At Mother

CHILDREN ON HOLIDAY from school often ask the mothers of babies if they can take the child out in the pram. I have often seen the result in the parks: children pretending to be mothers, making the babies lie down and go to sleep, waking them up again five minutes later, putting them on the grass while they remake the pram, smacking the babies, putting them back in the pram and putting the hood up and down until the baby wonders what is happening. If mothers could see all this, they would think twice before they allowed their babies to be taken out.—MRS. L. F. PRICE, Penyball Hill, Holywell, North Wales.

Three On A Walk

RECENTLY I HAD THE novel experience of taking a stroll accompanied by a grey squirrel and a robin. I had just reached my favourite footpath, lined with trees, when I saw the squirrel regarding me steadily from a tree trunk, while the robin's black eye held me from the bracken below. We all three stared, interested, for a few moments, before I continued my walk. For a hundred yards my devoted companions kept pace with me, the squirrel flashing from branch to branch, the robin hopping among the dead leaves. As I turned off the path they stopped, still with their eyes on my receding figure. I felt bound, in all politeness, to walk away backwards.—MRS. N. O., Barnet, Herts.

Young Father's Ordeal

FRITZ WEGNER PAINTED a very amusing cover picture (JOHN BULL, February 16) of a scene I have often witnessed. But at the hospital where I worked all fathers had to don masks before entering the nursery. This was done to cut down the risk of infection, but it only added to the ordeal of the

Fritz Wegner's fathers

nervous young father. — MRS. R. BULLOCK, S.R.N., 20 Edmund Road, Southsea, Hants.

An expert's comment: "There is no unbreakable rule. In many hospitals and nursing homes, such a scene would be possible. But most hospitals insist on fathers being masked and entering the nursery one at a time."

Letters intended for publication should be marked "Free Speech" and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.

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Young veteran

Leading Firewoman Lilian Thomas, Needham Road, Liverpool 7. Private secretary to estate agent. Aged 28, she was 16 when war was declared, joined A.R.P. immediately as air raid warden and saw considerable action. In 1943 she joined the W.R.N.S. When A.F.S. recruiting started in 1949 she immediately volunteered. She feels it's no use having a trained army if civilians can't look after themselves. Her duties take only two hours a fortnight — leaving her plenty of time to watch Everton or visit the Philharmonic Hall. And in the A.F.S. she has made new friends, been to socials, dances, concerts and on coach trips.

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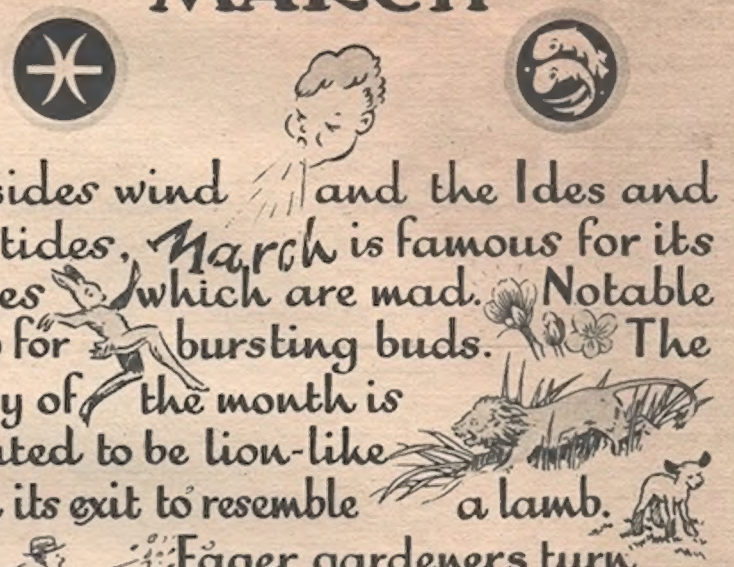
MARCH



Besides wind and the Ides and the tides, March is famous for its hares which are mad. Notable also for bursting buds. The entry of the month is reputed to be lion-like and its exit to resemble a lamb. Eager gardeners turn soil and plant potatoes. Horses make fast times at Lincoln where vast concourses will

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Delicious also with cold milk, and a little sugar, honey, syrup or jam.

NO POLICE ACTION

by ***THURMAN WARRINER***

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

On duty, there was nothing he could do about the loot. Alone, at night, there was

MR. MURCHISON FINISHED reading the Conditions of Sale in a voice dry as breakfast-cereal, and Beeding, the auctioneer, rose wearily to his feet. He had already sold fifteen lots, and Myrtle Cottage was nothing to get excited about.

"Any questions arising out of Conditions?" he asked.

There were no questions.

"You all know the place," he went on impersonally. "Most of you know it better than I do. Very useful to a retired couple or a small family. And in excellent repair, as I've verified for myself. Now, ladies and gentlemen, what may I say? A thousand?"

Hopeless as a castaway looking for a sail on the horizon, he glanced round the room. "No one start me at a thousand? Seven-fifty then? Five hundred? Anyone start me at five hundred?"

No one would. "All right, what's your idea? Snug little property. Not many in Holtrigg situated so pleasantly and conveniently. Did I hear two hundred?" He sighed deeply. "Two hundred I am bid."

The bidder was a black-clad little woman who lived across the way from Myrtle Cottage and had a growing family. "Two hundred!" repeated Beeding. "Two-fifty do I hear? Two-fifty on my right."

This time it was Hardacre, the butcher, whose daughter was getting married in October. "Three hundred? It's against you at three hundred, Mr. Hardacre."

"Three-fifty," said Hardacre woodenly.

"Four," said the woman in black.

"Four-fifty."

"Five hundred . . ." hesitantly.

Beeding glanced at the butcher. "I'll take twenty-fives," he said, and Hardacre nodded. "Five hundred twenty-five I am bid."

At five seventy-five, the woman dropped out. Beeding raised his hammer. "For the first time. . . . For the second time. . . ."

"*Six hundred,*" said a third voice, and necks

Tasker, peering into the well, saw the inspector perched grimly on the ladder six feet down. "What the devil are you doing down there?" he demanded

His chief looked up sharply. "Don't take it too far. We're none of us above the law"

craned to see a well-dressed man in the second row. It was Hinckley, a city man who frequently weekended at Holtrigg and had been heard to say he would like a cottage there.

But the butcher was not to be outdone. For three minutes the duel proceeded. With the bidding at twelve-fifty, Hardacre was flushed and angry.

"Finished, Mr. Hardacre?" asked Beeding. "It's against you at twelve-fifty. . . . For the first time. . . ." He raised his little ivory hammer. The city man, he thought sourly, always wins.

"*Fifteen hundred!*" came a voice from the back of the room, and Beeding started.

A thin, grey-faced man was standing near the door. The auctioneer glanced at him with astonishment and appreciation, then back to Hinckley.

"Seventeen-fifty," said Hinckley.

"Two thousand," said the man near the door.

Hinkley, quite obviously, had no intention of paying that price. But he knew the grey-faced man intended to have Myrtle Cottage, so let him pay for it.

"And a quarter."

"Two-five."

Beeding wiped the sweat from his face. The low rustle of conversation had swelled to a roar.

At eight thousand two-fifty, Beeding put down his hammer and approached the two men. This was something outside his experience. He wanted to know what there was about Myrtle Cottage to make it even more desirable than his announcements had claimed.

And at that moment, Inspector Bracegirdle entered.

He glanced disparagingly round the room. It was also Holtrigg's courtroom, and he had a professional objection to its commercial defilement in this manner. "What's going on?" he asked the clerk.

"Myrtle Cottage gone up to eight thousand-odd and they're not finished yet," the clerk said.

The inspector looked at him. He thought of the late Mrs. Haslam, who had owned Myrtle Cottage until her life ended under a Holtrigg bus some weeks ago. The sort of woman they called a recluse. Damned eccentric. Place full of cats, and a parrot that said the Lord's Prayer backwards. Had her coffin made years back, they said, because there wouldn't be enough money left when she died to pay for one, and she didn't want burying on the parish.

Bracegirdle watched Beeding return to the rostrum, and the bidding started again: It reached nine thousand two-fifty before Hinckley dropped out. Old Beeding would be sitting pretty on his commission, the inspector imagined.

"Your name?" the auctioneer asked.

"Tasker," said the grey-faced man. "F. W. Tasker."

"If you will come into the side room, Mr. Tasker, the contract can be drawn up," said Beeding.

The duel was reported largely in the *Holtrigg Mercury* and talked about for many a day. Meanwhile the cottage stood empty and was only periodically visited by its new owner, who seemed in no hurry to move in.

But Bracegirdle had not forgotten. He was very interested in Myrtle Cottage. And in Mr. Tasker. He caused discreet inquiries to be made and discovered that Tasker had appeared out of nowhere at Northfield some eight years ago. How much capital he had brought with him was uncertain. But he was a man of industry, for since then he had made a comfortable fortune out of a model bakery. Nothing you could actually put your finger on, mused the inspector. . . .

But by the time Tasker moved in, the following week, a hazy plan had formed in Bracegirdle's mind. He made it his habit to pass Myrtle Cottage whenever possible, hoping to encounter its owner and strike up some sort of acquaintance with him. And in this he was eventually successful.

"Nice to see the old place being taken care of again," he remarked over the garden wall. "I was at the sale."

Tasker's grey face smiled cautiously. "In uniform then, weren't you?"

"But not necessarily on duty. The police station happens to be in another part of the same building." He was very affable, the inspector. "Fetched quite a tidy price for a small cottage."

Tasker nodded. "It was just what I wanted. But the old girl didn't spend much in the way of improvements. It'll take some cleaning up, I can tell you that. You'll have to drop in some evening and look round, Inspector."

"Glad to," said Bracegirdle.

He proffered his cigarette-case, but it slipped from his fingers and dropped on Tasker's side of the wall. Tasker picked it up and handed it back. The inspector handled it by its edges.

Next day that cigarette-case, scientifically wrapped, was on its way to London. And later that week, the inspector stood with his back to the fire in Holtrigg police station, regarding Sergeant Strake with a bright eye.

"Tasker," he said, "isn't Tasker at all. His real name is Gerald Leeson. He's been inside seven years for manslaughter."

Sergeant Strake's eyes bulged. "Anything against him since then?"

"So far as I know, not a thing. Built up his business on the square. Must have had a bit to start with, of course, but that's neither here nor there."

Sergeant Strake waited. The inspector, he knew, liked to have his moments.

"Gerald Leeson was a cashier at Sharrard's in London. Well-respected and apparently trustworthy. No petty pilferer. Staked everything on one throw. He knew the ropes, of course. Knew when the strong-room was worth cracking. But he hadn't the expert knowledge necessary for the actual job. That's where Charlie Credland came in."

The inspector screwed an envelope into a spill and lit his pipe. "So we come to a chilly dawn, a good many years ago, when Gerald Leeson and Charlie Credland drove back towards town with sixty-odd thousand pounds in the back of the car. A patrolling constable heard two shots. When he reached the scene of the incident, Gerald Leeson—our Mr. Tasker—was lying in the gutter with a bullet through his shoulder and a revolver close by. The car was a hundred yards away by that time, careering all over the road as if its driver was harbouring a bullet, too. . . . Which he was. But he got away.

"Later," went on Bracegirdle, "Charlie Credland was found dying in his Camden Town residence. His story was that during the drive back after the robbery he'd quarrelled with Leeson over his share of the swag, and Leeson had shot him. But Credland was an ox of a man who could take more than one bullet. He'd grabbed the gun, shot back, kicked Leeson out of the car and driven off with the loot."

"So they got it back?" asked Sergeant Strake.

"They did not. Credland had been living with a woman, his wife or otherwise. But he was obviously bound for regions where cash is of little value, and it's a hard world for a woman. So she left the premises and took the loot with her. She'd had six hours' start when the boys arrived."

He looked hard at his sergeant. "You're an intelligent man," he said generously. "Draw your own conclusions."

"Easy!" said Sergeant Strake. "What sort of loot was it?"

"Mostly cash, small denominations. Some securities, I believe."

"Easy!" the sergeant said again. "She lay low for a while, then came up here, for some reason, and started life as Mrs. Haslam."

"Exactly. With a fortune hidden somewhere in Myrtle Cottage—she was from this part of the country originally. A fortune that Gerald Leeson, alias Mr. F. W. Tasker, has bought the cottage to get." The inspector smiled.

It was a week before Bracegirdle availed himself of Tasker's invitation and dropped in to see how Myrtle Cottage was being cleaned up.

"Making a nice job of it, Mr. Tasker," he said.

"Leeson's the name," the grey-faced man said. "You know that, Inspector. I wasn't overimpressed with your cigarette-case technique."

Bracegirdle blinked. "In that case," he said, recovering himself, "I suppose you're going to order me out?"

"Why should I? We've the same interests, Inspector, even if they spring from different motives. Sit down and make yourself at home. Any questions you'd like to ask?"

"Plenty. For a start, aren't you taking a bit of a gamble?"

"I've always been a gambler," said Tasker. "I've paid nine thousand for this one-eyed

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Anona with composer Harry Jacobson. When she first sang for Cochran, he asked if she could dance

Anona Winn, radio's bright spark

by DENNIS HOLMAN

The girl who gave us a new Christian name has become a paradox—a singer whose speaking voice is better known

ONE DAY, ANONA WINN TOOK a taxi to the Paris Cinema, where most of the B.B.C.'s light broadcasts from London are staged. As she got out and was rooting in her bag for the fare, somebody called her name, and the taxi-driver turned to have a good look at her. "So you're Anona Winn!" Slowly he shook his head. "Funny thing," he said, "it's always the plain ones that are the cleverest." Anona swears that she gave him a tip.

Pointing to her nose, she tells how it came to be a trifle flattened. As a child, she landed on it from the top of a flight of stairs. Years later, driving her late husband's La Salle a few days before they were to be married, she skidded into a bus and struck her nose hard against the steering wheel. This postponed "the day" for becoming Mrs. Lamport. The third bash came as she was on her way to "dub" a song in one of Anna Neagle's films. Her taxi hit a car, and Anona hit the glass partition. When the driver found her, she thought she had lost her front teeth, and was weeping. "You don't know what this means to me," she told him. "My singing days are over."

They were not. She dubbed the song for Anna Neagle, and others for Lilian Harvey, Wendy Barrie and Winifred Shotter.

When Anona first arrived in London, it seemed that theatrical and opera producers measured talent by the yard. Anona, being too small, was left to develop her personality, her quick-fire repartee, her rather vivid means of expressing herself, and some of her forthright views.

One of Anona's typical personality exploits was her band—a septet she called "Anona Winn and the Winners." She conducted, compèred and managed it like a pocket-sized dictator. At every performance they did at least one operatic aria, which Anona sang. They broadcast regularly, and once a B.B.C. producer, turning over the pages of music for her, was so carried away by "Vissi d'Arte" from *La Tosca* that he burst into song himself. He was not a singer, and the result evoked quite a few queries.

Anona's first B.B.C. experience belongs to a pattern familiar to many top radio personalities. She was turned down the first time. Advised to try again, she told a white lie. No, she said, she had never been auditioned before.

This time the official noted, "Excellent—a find!" on her card; though, when this was passed through the proper administrative channels, her old card was turned up, with the damning remark—"Utterly unsuitable for broadcasting."

Grisewood To The Rescue

All in good time Anona was able to see what certain top notes did to the flickering needles on the control panel; she put her songs down a third in key for the microphone, and developed a technique of her own—that of drawing well back as she went up the scale, and coming forward again for the low notes. One engineer called it her shadow boxing, because during a complicated passage it looked like a neat bit of footwork. But the first time Freddie Grisewood saw it, through the glass panels of a sound-proofed control-room, he rushed out thinking she was tottering on the verge of collapse.

Early in 1945, when Anona had linked up with Walter Fellows to produce a series of seaside summer shows, she was in the West End one day and decided to call on her old friend "Mike" Meehan, of the B.B.C. variety department.

"Anona!" he greeted her. "You were always a bright girl. Sit down." She sat apprehensively. "What is the name of the Army division fighting its way into Mandalay?" he demanded.

"Dagger," she answered.

"Who is the world heavy-weight champion?"

"Joe Louis."

"What were Mozart's Christian names?"

"Wolfgang Amadeus."

His eyes lit up. "You're the very person I've been looking for!"

That afternoon Anona was on the air in a quiz which included Christopher Stone, Compton Mackenzie and Ada Reeve. She was on again the following week, and soon after that she joined a quiz team which ran for nearly a year. The challengers were grouped in teams belonging to the same walk of life, and once, when there were four radio commentators, Anona answered five of the six questions on sport. Stewart MacPherson, who was one of the commentators, never forgot that performance.

Months later, when he returned from America with Maurice Winnick and the British rights of *Twenty Questions*, MacPherson immediately thought of Anona as one of the team to put it over. The show was booked originally for six weeks. It is still running after more than five years, and in that time Anona Winn has become one of those curious paradoxes of the B.B.C.—a singer who is better known for her speaking voice.

Named After A Princess

Anona believes that she imported her Christian name into Britain. Fans write for broadcast tickets, saying that they have named their daughters after her. One of these was taken to be christened at a church in Maidstone, and the parson asked: "Is that a Christian name?" Anona's mother got it from a book about a Red Indian princess of the Iroquois tribe, who translate the name as Happy Harvest.

Born in Sydney, Anona had parents of Irish and English descent. Her paternal grandfather, a Yorkshireman, had emigrated to Australia in a windjammer with a Waddington piano in his luggage. In Sydney he ran a woollen warehouse, though the piano came into its own during his spare time, and Anona's father was brought up to its accompaniment. Her mother

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THE NAKED ISLAND (3) by RUSSELL BRADDON

Plotting escape from our horror camp

Things looked promising. Getting out was easy, and the men who hoped to reach freedom had food and even arms. But it finished in disaster, with brave men being made to dig their own graves

LIFE STAGGERED ON IN PUDU, the jail in Kuala Lumpur, Malaya, where 1,000 British, Australian and Asiatic prisoners of war were dumped by the Japanese in 1942. I developed a savage purple swelling right up the leg, which the doctor prodded, leaving a dent for hours afterwards. The swelling became acutely painful, with electric stabbings—then vanished.

Hugh Moore, one of my cellmates, was driven by his "happy feet" to join the sleepless band who every night walked round and round the second floor balcony which flanked the well of the three tiers of cells. Arthur Farmer, my other cellmate, suffered increasingly from wind; his figure grew gaunter and his blue eyes more glittering.

And one day, as our work drew to its exhausting close, I turned to Hugh and said: "Thank God, in another hour we'll all be back at home." So, after only a few months, those high claustrophobic walls, the bare bug-ridden concrete cells, the crowded patches of worn grass and that ornate white fountain which was the communal bath of 1,000 men, had changed from being a prison to *Home*. Life was indeed assuming a different aspect.

The next day, having arrived at the stage where I could think of a cell in a jail as "home," Hugh and I determined to make it so. We mentioned the subject to Arthur and he was enthusiastic. We set out on the day's work determined to steal fittings suitable to the embellishment of a room in one of His Majesty's lousiest prisons.

Braddon's friend, Hugh Moore, who joined up with him and shared his cell in Pudu prison

Stole To Furnish Cell

At night, when we returned, we had some promising material. Hugh had "sent off"—stolen, in other words—an electric light bulb and a lampshade. Arthur had collected a vase, a small mat, some signal wire and four nails. I had acquired a Balinese head in wood and a stool. The stool, during the search, I had sat on, and it therefore escaped the guard's attention: but the head (life-size), even though I laid it negligently on the ground and rested my foot on it as if it were a rock, the guard spotted. Much bellowing and pushing about. Then, unfortunately, the unhealed wounds in my foot began to bleed furiously and (as usual at the sight of blood) all the Nips became very unpleasant.

It was explained to me, by gestures, that my head was about to be rendered as bodiless as the Balinese one. Though most reluctant, I was forced to kneel. The guard commander took out his sword and swished it. Then, advancing left foot foremost, one pace at a time, in that graceless fashion which the Japanese swordsman always uses, and swinging the sword sharply downwards at each step, he moved towards me. Finally, with a hoarse "*Banzai!*" he bounded the last few feet and brought his sword down with a resounding thud. The Balinese head lay beside me cleft in two.

As the Nips laughed uproariously at this demonstration of their national humour, an Argyll put a hand under my elbow and helped me to my feet (a service for which I was grateful). We marched inside the jail. When I sat in my cell a few moments later, a squat, broad-shouldered figure, a former coal-miner from Newcastle-on-Tyne, appeared in the doorway.

"Here's the head you brought back, Aussie," he said, holding it out. "Half of it, anyway," he amended. To bring in that half-head after the demonstration the guards had given of their temper at that moment was a gesture which would have taken more courage than I shall ever have. All I could say, though, was: "Thanks, Shorty," while Arthur said: "Good on you, mate," and Hugh curiously examined the wooden carving. "That's all right," said the man from Newcastle-on-Tyne, rather embarrassed. "I hate those mookers anyway," and he strode out, through the grill, back to the British cells.

His mouth bleeding, the Nip stood dazed.

We stood the half-head—the face was intact—on the stool in the corner of the cell. The signal wire we made into a length of flex and ran it along the top of the wall out through the door. There, using two of Arthur's four nails, we plugged the flex into the main power line which ran along the front of the cells just above door level. Then we fitted Hugh's bulb into the lampshade (which included a socket), joined the socket to the flex and—to our delight, for none of us was mechanically inclined—we had light. Pale pink light.

Next day Arthur brought home frangipane blooms, and that night we sat on the cell slab, our feet on a mat, our beards gleaming in soft pink light, my map of the world confronting us from the wall, a delicately carved wooden face gazing at us from the corner, a vase of white, sweet-scented flowers on the floor. We felt most

ILLUSTRATION BY RONALD SEARLE

Two ranks of prisoners waited tensely. "Leave the Aussie alone, you animal," the little Scot said quietly. The silence that ensued was startling

elegant. The doorway was crowded with admiring soldiery. Hugh suddenly spun round from the back wall of the cell against which he had been leaning and jabbed with an indignant thumb. "Blast those bugs," he cried and, as he scratched at his left shoulder and jabbed with his left thumb and finger, the air became full of that familiar musty smell and the illusion of elegance vanished. Nevertheless, it had been worth it.

Having resurrected all the bridges which our own troops had blown up in the course of their evacuation, the Imperial Japanese Army now required us one morning to remove bombs and heavy shells from a huge underground dump outside Kuala Lumpur and to load them on to trucks, thence on to trains. We refused. The Japanese brought out all their machine guns and lined them up opposite our mutinous squads. They repeated their request. We agreed.

All that day, and for weeks thereafter, we moved bombs, shells, grenades and explosives out of the dark caverns of the dump. We loaded them on to waiting lorries and then transshipped them on to trains. We were thus making a direct contribution to the Japanese war effort, and it was a fact for which we did not greatly admire ourselves. The munitions we manhandled were, we realized, to be used against our own Allied troops in New Guinea and the Solomons.

It was only natural, therefore, that men should attempt to reassert their pride by various and devious means, none of which would greatly have recommended itself to the Nips had it been discovered.

Guns Sabotaged With Tar

Anti-tank guns do not fire very accurately if the rifling in their muzzles is blocked. Accordingly, we poured molten pitch down the barrels —a hit and run operation which involved the sacrifice of many a mug or dixie as a receptacle for this boiling-down and carrying to the gun. But it was done. And for every breech-block which we scrubbed and scoured till it was free of rust, there was one barrel which we sabotaged with tar.

Sticks of gelignite and grenades—particularly plastic grenades—are small and easily secreted when one is practised in the art of secreting. Thus, under the inspired leadership of Frank Van Rennan, who taught us the value of cold-blooded bluffing, all those who had headgear wore a hatful of explosives back to Pudu. When we were searched, though our guards looked in all the usual places and anywhere else that was even remotely anatomically feasible, they did not look on our heads. The jail became infested with sudden death, and as a result the mass execution with which we were so constantly being threatened assumed a less one-sided air.

Finally, as we emerged for the last time after a particularly vile day's work in these subterranean dumps, one of our number announced blithely that he had set two booby traps inside which, in his considered opinion, would start a chain of detonations sufficient to destroy all the ammunition in that hillside, and half of Kuala

Lumpur as well. This remarkable feat was greeted with mixed emotions for several excellent reasons. Those reasons were, in this order: (1) The man concerned was a sapper and should, therefore, know his stuff. (2) He had not made any particular note of which branch of the main tunnel contained his booby traps, and could not remember even approximately where they were because of the Stygian gloom inside. (3) We were all due to return to the dump for more bomb-loading the next day.

The prospect of treading on the sapper's booby trap, however uplifting from the point of view of the Allied war effort, was generally agreed to be depressing as far as the more immediate problem of oneself surviving the war was concerned. In our bare feet the next day, and for a week thereafter, we worked with catlike tread.

But for a week there came no noise more explosive than the shuffling of our own bare soles, and the incessant screaming of our guards and the rather monotonous thuds of blows as they urged us on to more "speedo." And then the lorries which were used to carry the ammunition all broke down and the task was abandoned. In spite both of the sapper and of the fearsome risks incurred by the "grenade runners," who so cheerfully followed the example of Van Rennan, we had all survived.

Planned Escape In Open Boat

Frank Van Rennan had not so assiduously been acquiring ammunition for nothing. He had come into the jail (after a month's guerrilla warfare against the Japanese) only to save the local population from further reprisals against his own energetic demolition activities. But though he had surrendered himself voluntarily, neither he nor his friends intended staying. They proposed leaving the jail as soon as their plans were complete, and heading for the west coast, where they had arranged—through native contacts, for they had all lived in Malaya as planters before the war—for a boat to be waiting for them, and from there they were going to sail to India.

It was an ambitious plan, and yet it was by no means hopeless. Van Rennan, Graham, Harvey and three others had lived in the area and knew it well. They all spoke the local dialects. They had organized a chain of contacts right across to the coast. They had all acquired sarongs and native shoes and shirts; they were dark. Moreover, they had stolen sufficient food to enable them to do the whole journey to the coast without asking for any help from the native population, and they had ample grenades with which to defend themselves.

To make up their numbers to an adequate crew for a trip across the Indian Ocean in an open boat, they accepted two recruits. One, an Australian named Bell; the second, a young Dutch pilot called Jan.

Covering Up The Escapees

The big night came and the party left the jail silently by the side gate, the locks of which had been receiving their attention for some time past. Early next morning we Australians fell in on the check parade with the task of covering up the departure of Jan and Bell. Though this was simple enough, it was worrying because it had to succeed the first time.

If the little Nip miscounted the four men who asked his permission at the beginning of the parade to go to the latrine (two of whom, instead, took up blank positions carefully left for them in the rear rank), then he would recount our whole parade and go over to the latrines and count the men there. Then we would be two short. Then there would be explanations to make, which would be difficult. And it was quite possible, knowing the Nipponese standards of addition, that by adding four alleged absentees to the total of the men who stood before him, the guard—who rejoiced in the name of "Frogface"—would *not* reach the correct total.

It was with considerable relief, therefore, that we heard him say, at the conclusion of his count: "*Okayge yazume*"—O.K. Stand at ease. Now all that remained to be seen was whether three similar such bluffs had worked with three of Frogface's equivalents on the other check parades, so that all the escapees were covered. It was not until the figures for the entire jail had been received and checked that any one parade was dismissed, so we had to wait.

Harry stood beside me and laughed. He was one of those to whom the task of asking for permission to go to the latrines and then joining the rear rank had been allotted.

"Frogface fell for it," he commented. We watched him approach us: Harry with open

Changi Jail, Singapore, where Braddon was later imprisoned. This picture was taken when the prisoners were released

scorn, I with considerable anxiety. Would he dismiss us or would one of the other squads have slipped up, which would involve the whole jail in a recount?

"*Okayga,*" he grunted, "all men go." We were dismissed, and the escape party now had twelve hours' start.

That was the theory of it. Unfortunately, the practice was different. Before they had even cleared the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur the small band of escapees had been seized by natives and had been forced to fight their way free. Twice more during the night-march natives attempted to grapple with them, and at dawn a large patrol of Japanese infantry had suddenly surrounded them as they studied their maps. Escape was impossible, and to attempt to fight was suicidal.

At lunch-time they were back in the jail—their return witnessed by a horrified community of prisoners. They were shackled, looked badly shaken and pale, and were not allowed near us. We shouted out to them and they smiled back wanly. They were taken to the guardhouse.

We asked if we could give them some food. The request was refused. Instead, the guard commander asked some very awkward questions as to just how, with eight men missing, the jail had nevertheless managed to return its full number on the morning check parade. Without any hesitation at all, the blame was cast squarely upon the guards. This served for the moment to addle the guard commander, who retired to think it over.

In a manner typically Japanese, when he did think it over, he went off at a tangent and arrived at a completely different but most unwelcome conclusion. The recaptured men, he recollected, had had grenades in their possession. There might, he thought, be other grenades in the jail. Fortunately he said so to one of the guards, and the English duty officer, who was a bright lad, heard him.

Consequently, when, five minutes later, the guard suddenly swept through the jail, looking for bombs, they swept through just three minutes behind two officers and a rice sack. Into the sack went every piece of explosive material we possessed. As the tour continued, the sack grew heavier, but the officers struggled gamely on until they had collected all the incriminating evidence. Then, just about thirty seconds ahead of the guard, they dragged the sack to the fountain, which was our communal bath, and deposited it into the tall, lily-shaped basin.

When the guards appeared they observed two childish officers playing rather silly games in the water. With curt "*Currahs*" they ordered them out and sent them packing. Then they themselves went back to the guardhouse and reported that there were no grenades in the jail. We resumed our breathing.

Faced Death Bravely

It became fairly obvious, after two days in which they had been allowed no food, no water and no latrine facilities, that the Japanese were evilly disposed towards our escape party. The next morning we saw the whole party suddenly appear in the jail's entrance just outside the guardhouse. All their gear had been dumped near them—haversacks and clothing—but they themselves were still fiercely shackled and were filthy dirty. They looked very weak. The Japanese motioned them towards the jail gate. Inquiringly Van Rennan gestured with his foot towards the pile of haversacks. The Japanese nodded negatively, emphatically. It could mean only one thing. They knew it, and we knew it.

They were brave men, those eight. Their heads went up, and while we shouted cheerful remarks at them, trying not to let them know what we sensed, they grinned back at us so that we shouldn't sense what they knew. Whenever one of them turned our way, a mass smile would appear on all the strained faces that watched their departure. As soon as their backs were turned, the smile vanished. They were prodded and shoved, clumsy with their arms and legs bound, into a truck. They turned to face us; we smiled. The guard spoke to them; they looked down at him; our smiles vanished. The guard stopped speaking; they looked up; we smiled. Then the truck lurched off and the big gates shut. They were gone.

Later, the Indian who drove the truck told us that they were taken to Kuala Lumpur cemetery, there made to dig their own graves, and then shot down into them. So ended the first, most promising and last escape plot of Pudu.

Dreamt Of Chocolate Éclairs

The year was now jogging steadily along in this strange life. Beards were luxuriant and coiffures poetic. We even played fiercely contested games of baseball on the communal triangle of lawn—a practice which ceased abruptly when we defeated a team put up by our guards. Our nightly dreams about food—quaint fantasies of chocolate éclairs mixed with steak and heavily garnished with eggs—became less recurrent.

The Japanese declared generously that they would pay us for our work—ten cents a day. Thus, if one worked every day of the month, one earned the lavish sum of three dollars. This would buy a small handful of dried fish, a little oil in which to fry it, and a banana or two.

As soon as we received our pay, we seized

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Tracking down the madness bread

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

The disease that had terrified Pont-Saint-Esprit had at last been identified: it was the "Blight of Hell" of the Middle Ages. But many questions were still being asked

MARSEILLES

FIVE BAKERIES in the small French town of Pont-Saint-Esprit reopened on August 23, 1951. On the door of Roch Briand's, at 29 Grande Rue, the steel shutters stayed down. Behind them the police were taking more specimens of his flour, strongly suspected of causing the frightening outbreak of illness and madness that was sweeping the town. The baker himself, haggard after more than fifty hours of insomnia, was re-examined by the magistrate, M. Perrier, in an office at the *Mairie,* the town hall.

Briand, who had been a baker for twenty years, was respected both personally and professionally in Pont-Saint-Esprit. The fact that he had been the—as he held—unwitting cause of the misfortune that had come to the town seemed to affect him deeply. To M. Perrier, he could only repeat the story he had told twice already—that he had baked his bread normally from flour he thought to be good.

In Nîmes, Commissioner Sigaud of the Montpellier *gendarmerie,* testing the first link in the complicated chain that would lead him back to the origin of the poisoned flour, was making inquiries at the *Union Meunière du Gard,* the authority for the distribution of cereals throughout the region.

From Marseilles police laboratory, at ten thirty, Professor Ollivier telephoned to the mayor at Pont-Saint-Esprit. He told M. Hébrard that neither the post-mortem on the first victim, Félix Mison, nor his own experiments with the poisoned bread, had yet yielded any positive result.

In Pont-Saint-Esprit itself, the authorities, now desperately worried, were doing all they could to clarify the situation. The mayor, his assistant, M. Rodier, and M. Orsini, his secretary, had hardly left their posts for a week. The total of the sick was mounting steadily. More than a hundred people were dangerously ill; eighteen were still in a state of violent delirium.

Many had not slept for days on end. Some suffered from persecution mania and suicidal urges; they were haunted by hallucinations of more than surrealistic fantasy. Madame Félicienne Moulin, a staid woman of seventy-two, kept seeing an immense silver-shod black horse, "as big as a mountain," lashing its fiery, comet-like tail at a limitless sky swarming with bees. A girl of fourteen, Monique Roux, told her mother gravely that she was flying low over enormous, singing and prehensile flowers which clutched at her dress as she passed.

How the madness struck. A screaming victim, M. Guigou, fights as he is carried to hospital

"Look! The Murderers!"

Later in the afternoon, a thirty-three year old commercial traveller, Roger Serrecour, ran into the police station and asked for protection. "Look!" he shouted. "The murderers, they want to kill me!" He pulled the station sergeant from his desk, dragged him into the passage and, pointing to the empty air, reeled off the names of the men he believed to be crowding round the door. He was overpowered and taken to the infirmary.

It was not only adolescents and adults that the madness attacked. In the children's clinic at Avignon, a child from Pont-Saint-Esprit, four-year-old Marie Thérèse, ran screaming to the matron, convinced that a beast was chasing her and that her clothes were covered with blood. In the same place, Marie Tarié, a girl of six, cried: "It's a monster!" and fled from the ball the nurses had rolled towards her.

The "Bread of Madness" had now become first-class news; the town was crowded with journalists, sightseers and self-appointed private detectives. To all their questions, the staff of the *Mairie* could only reply: "We know nothing. You must wait."

On the 24th, five more cases were evacuated before noon. All were in strait-jackets or tied

to their stretchers. Among them was an old couple, M. and Mme Rieu, both seventy years of age. Madame Rieu had both her wrists broken. Earlier in the day, gasping for breath and crying that she was being pursued, she had thrown herself from the window of the infirmary.

In the afternoon, the doctors met the authorities again. The situation was discussed less from the clinical than from the psychological point of view. The town was dangerously troubled: rumour and counter-rumour followed each other every hour. The total of those infected, great enough in all conscience, was being grossly exaggerated. A Paris newspaper described Pont-Saint-Esprit as "one vast asylum"; another told of the streets "ringing horribly with the cries of the demented." The only thing that could counter the threat of a collective fear was missing—hard facts. At 3 p.m., the mayor, a small, dignified man, his eyes red with worry and lack of sleep, dismissed the conference dispiritedly.

Clue For The Police

Nor was there any news from the laboratory at Marseilles. Although the rabbits to which Professor Ollivier had fed the poisoned bread were dying after a short period of madness, identification of the poison seemed to be as far off as ever.

The Montpellier police, from their side, were reporting better progress. The flour which had been delivered to the bakers at Pont-Saint-Esprit on August 8, and from which Briand had baked his bread eight days later, had arrived in the Gard from somewhere in the Poitou district, 300 miles to the north-west. Commissioner Sigaud sent out his men to follow up the clue.

By now, the outbreak had lasted a week. Saturday, August 25, was the worst day the town had known. Charles Ganjeon, a boy of eleven who was being nursed at home, suddenly tried to strangle his mother. His was the first of twenty-three cases evacuated to hospitals at Nîmes and Montpellier before evening. The infirmary in the Hôtel-Dieu was more like an asylum than a hospital. For a time, while she waited for the overworked ambulances to arrive, the matron, Mme Nègre, had more than twenty stretchers to deal with. She and her nurses had to call assistance from the passers-by to help to control the raving patients. At midnight, when the last case of the day, a young farmer called Joseph Moulin, had been taken to Nîmes, the mayor made his latest tally. Two hundred and seventeen people had been poisoned; forty were in hospital.

In the early hours of the next day, Sunday, both the Rieus died within an hour of each other in the hospital at Montpellier. The news seemed to bring resignation to the town; people grew calmer and the rumours died down; journalists found it harder to get their stories. At a meeting of the council in the morning, it was decided to postpone the *fête* of Pont-Saint-Esprit, held annually on September 1. As the notices of cancellation went up, a local cinema was posting the bills of its latest film. The title, by a macabre coincidence, was *The Bread of the Poor*.

An Arrest Expected

On the 27th, the doctors noticed a slight but definite improvement in some of their patients. They appeared less agitated, the fever had dropped and they were even getting some sleep. As against this, there was a new and alarming factor: people who had not hitherto been affected in any way suddenly became violently ill. Others, who seemed to have recovered, were relapsing.

In the afternoon, Professor Ollivier sent the mayor an official announcement. "We can be certain of nothing," it said. "We know neither the nature of the poison nor how to deal with its effects. We have noted, however, that it is liable to act more violently on the old than on the young." This was hardly encouraging, but it was honest—an official confirmation of the local doctors' opinion. From Montpellier, the police reported themselves satisfied with the progress of the inquiry; an arrest could be expected very soon.

The following morning the nervous tension was renewed. M. Guigou, one of Dr. Channac's first patients, suddenly became mad. Screaming and writhing, he was carried from his house through a lane of excited spectators. The town grew more crowded than ever. With the tourist season at its height, hundreds of visitors stopped their cars and wandered curiously through the streets. Those who tried to inquire got no very clear idea of what was going on; for the townsfolk, indignation had merged with lassitude, and

Baker Guy Bruère, who, illegally, accepted doubtful grain from his peasant customers

Maurice Maillet bought some of the infected grain. He milled it, then sold it

Roch Briand, baker, who—unknowingly, he said—used the rotten flour to make bread

fantasy with fact. It was as if Pont-Saint-Esprit itself had been touched with the disease.

At 11 a.m. on Wednesday the funeral of the Rieus took place. The hundreds who attended heard the mayor with approval as, in an address at the graveside, he promised that if ever their distress could be traced to a culpable human agency, he would demand that exemplary measures be taken.

Result Of Post-mortems

The human agency was about to be discovered. While the Rieus were being buried, police of the Mobile Brigade were leaving Poitiers for a small village called Saint-Martin-la-Rivière, in the department of Vienne.

At 9 p.m. the news the public had awaited for eleven frightening days was given out from the *Mairie*. It took the form of a cautious statement from Marseilles. As a result of the post-mortem examinations of the Rieus, it said, two observations on the nature of the poison could be made. First, it was certainly of vegetable origin; secondly, it was very probably ergot. It was not a name that many in Pont-Saint-Esprit who read or heard it recognized. Yet, otherwise called, it meant something which their distant forbears had known very well.

Ergot (*claviceps purpurea*) is a fungus which attacks all cereals but is mainly found in rye. In ergot there are several active alkaloids, including ergotoxine and ergotamine. They produce chronic poisoning known as ergotism. This was the epidemic from which the people of Pont-Saint-Esprit were suffering.

Ergotism knows two types: the gangrenous and the spasmodic, or nervous, form. In its nervous form the disease was well known and widespread in the Middle Ages, when some of its symptoms—tingling and itching of the skin, a burning head, and the sensation of small flames running all over the limbs—earned it the name of Holy Fire, or St. Anthony's Fire. In France, in those days, it was known as *le mal des ardents* or *le mal d'enfer*—the "Blight of Hell."

Poisoning with ergot can be deadly and, as in the Middle Ages, is still without an antidote. Thirty to forty centigrams in a 400-gram loaf is enough to kill a man. Because of its rarity, it is little known today, yet there have been sporadic outbreaks of ergotism in fairly recent times. It was last known in France in 1816, when there was an epidemic in Burgundy and Lorraine. During the Russian famine, 10,000 people perished when bread was baked from rotting rye. England has known it as late as 1926, when there was a small outbreak in Manchester.

Sordid Story Of Greed

Careful sieving, strict supervision and control, frequent inspection and modern methods of storage have made accidental infection of flour almost impossible today. Above all, it is a condition very easy to recognize. The infected grains turn black, taste rancid and give off a clammy, fishy odour. No one with any experience of cereals—farmer, peasant, miller or baker—could possibly make a mistake. How came it, then, the people of Pont-Saint-Esprit were asking on the morning of August 30, that a disease unknown for a century and a half could rage in a French town in 1951?

The police gave the answer the next day when, in the village of Saint-Martin-la-Rivière, 300 miles from the Rhône Valley, they arrested two men: Maurice Maillet, a miller, and a local baker, Guy Bruère. Maillet, a small, simian man, at first denied all knowledge of the infected rye. Pressed by the police, who knew far more than Maillet suspected, he finally came out with the truth. It was a sordid story of greed and almost inconceivable cynicism.

There still exists in France—and all peasant countries—an illegal custom by which farmers often pay their bakers in kind. Instead of money, the peasant settles his bread bill with an agreed amount of grain. In the spring of 1951, Bruère, the only baker in his village, received several

With grave faces, Mayor Hébrard (hand on telephone) and the doctors confer in the *Mairie* of Pont-Saint-Esprit. But there was nothing they could do

sacks of wheat and rye from his peasant customers. Some of the sacks, Bruère admits, contained grain of very doubtful quality. Maillet bought these sacks cheaply and milled the flour, which he was careful to send away as far as possible from his own district—to the Gard. Maillet admitted fraud and the improper purchase of grain; he denied that he had any idea of the lethal content of the flour.

One thing of which Maillet was quite certain was the number of sacks which, he knew, were not up to standard. It was thirteen. All these doubtful sacks found their way to the distributing authority in the Gard. All of them were delivered, on August 7 and 8, to bakers in Pont-Saint-Esprit and the surrounding villages.

Not all the bakers accepted them. Baker Monier, of Connaux, rejected five sacks and informed the authorities in Nîmes that the flour was suspect. The day before, August 7, Fernand Buou, a baker of Saint-Genies-de-Comolas, telephoned a similar message about two sacks whose flour he described as "rotten."

What the people of Pont-Saint-Esprit wanted to know was why Roch Briand had been less perspicacious than his colleagues. Nor was that the only question. Briand, to help out his friend, the baker Josserand, lent him two sacks on August 10. Later, he took one back. It was from the flour in this sack, Briand told the police, that he baked the poisoned bread on the night of August 16. But Josserand, also, baked from the infected flour—and not one of his customers was affected.

The only possible conclusion is that of the thirteen sacks which the miller admits contained a proportion of infected rye, a single one, that which Briand used for his second oven on the night of the 16th, contained a dose of ergot massive enough to have an effect. One theory on which the police are still working is that Maillet, finding he was a few pounds short in the thirteenth sack, cynically made up the weight with sweepings from his granary floor.

While these puzzling questions were being discussed in Pont-Saint-Esprit, the epidemic gave no sign of faltering. On Wednesday, August 29, Joseph Moulin, the thirty-three year old farmer who had been taken ill four days before, died in Nîmes hospital. His was the fourth—and youngest—death since the outbreak. The next day, Louis Roux, one of Dr. Gabbai's earliest patients, was shaken with violent convulsions. On the way to the infirmary, in great agony of mind, he kept repeating to the doctor that he had only a day to live. Later on the same night, René Argillier, who had been congratulated by his friends on his complete recovery, went mad in turn. He was a very powerful man; it took four men to carry him through the narrow, unlit street to the hospital.

Gossip And Suspicion

It was not till September 8 that the doctors dared to declare a definite slackening of the epidemic. There had been 270 cases altogether; five had died; thirty were still in hospital. Of the 135 cases discharged from hospitals and asylums, nearly all were still complaining of weakness, insomnia and hallucinations. A month after the outbreak, people were still being taken ill in the street, at the wheel of their car, at work, or in the midst of their friends. Ergotamine is known to have a special effect on women, and some who were pregnant at the time of infection had subsequent miscarriages.

A month after the last patient had been discharged from hospital, Pont-Saint-Esprit was still a whispering and troubled place where gossip, suspicion and the poison pen had come into their own. Briand, the baker, has been cleared of all responsibility. The fault is thought to lie on a higher level—on the authorities charged with the supervision and distribution of cereals. That is the world of the anonymous civil servant, a world to which the people of Pont-Saint-Esprit are strangers. To them the reality is the board, still hanging on the walls of the *Mairie*, which bears the name of the doctor on duty.

Maurice Maillet and his accomplice, Bruère, have been released temporarily. At the worst, they risk no more than two years' imprisonment and a fine of £40. Meanwhile the doctors and experts are disagreeing. While the police laboratory at Marseilles confirms the presence of ergot in the original specimens of bread, the military laboratory of the same town, working on behalf of the Cereal Office, reports negative results.

Instigated by Mayor Hébrard and led by Dr. Vieu, 200 of those who were attacked by the disease have organized a "Society for the Defence of the Victims of Pont-Saint-Esprit." It aims at petitioning the Government for financial help for those—and they are many—who are still too weak to work. Above all, with the help of one of the best-known lawyers in France, it aims at bringing into the full light the dubious complex of events which brought three weeks of nightmare to an obscure and happy town. THE END

Maychester sees the light

by ***JACK TREVOR STORY***

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

The world had its Marconis and Edisons. We had our Joe—the leading light of the village. And how he lit it up!

THE DAY IT BECAME CERTAIN that there would be no mains electricity available in Maychester, the villagers who had been agitating for it, as well as those who had been agitating against it, held a protest meeting in the Hayley Memorial Hall next to Joe Guthrie's garage.

"They're a bit too high-handed, that's what," said Sol Green, the carter at Jameson's small-holding. Sol had been loud in his protests at the project, but now that the matter had been settled with no reference to his likes or dislikes, he was very angry. "If we wants the electric, why shouldn't we get it? An' if we don't want the electric, why should we get it? That's what I say."

"Hear, hear," said Mr. Jameson, Sol's boss. "My missis has already bought herself a 'lectric flat-iron—as Joe Guthrie here'll bear out, for she got it off him. What's she goin' to do with that, I'd like to know?"

"You tell us, old 'un!" The voice came from the back of the hall and Mr. Jameson sat down, turning red.

Then Joe Guthrie got up and looked round. "I got something to suggest," he said. The laughter and the talking stopped straight away. If Joe Guthrie had something to suggest it was sure to be worth listening to. Hadn't Joe invented wireless? Hadn't he invented the motor-bike? Wasn't he responsible for every modern convenience in the village? He had even fitted a battery-driven electric motor on the well so that all you had to do was put the bucket on the hook and press a button. Whatever the children of the village learned about the inventions of Edison, Marconi and Stephenson, secretly they knew that Joe Guthrie had invented them all before.

Joe's garage was a centre of interest to the progressive males of Maychester. Inside he had a platform for raising and lowering cars; at the back was a workbench equipped with everything from electric drills to an oxy-acetylene welding plant; along one side stood a big lathe driven by an electric motor—all powered by a great bed of car batteries which he kept charged in some miraculous way from the motor which they fed. "Eternal combustion" Joe called it.

Besides supplying and repairing all the bikes and motor-bikes of the district, Joe sold wireless parts, batteries, bulbs, lamps, puncture outfits and even little tubes of aspirin, and had done for years. When Joe had first started up, and wireless was no more than an occasional squeak and whistle with perhaps a few piano notes thrown in, Joe's parlour had been filled with friends and neighbours night after night, all holding one earphone and regarding Joe with awe.

BUT those days were long past; all the old wonders had been taken for granted while new wonders were awaited. And the wonder most eagerly awaited—by the younger generation at least—was the electric mains. The big pylons had come striding across the fenlands as far as Market Walden, and there they had stopped. And after all, the war was long over and there was no excuse. Little wonder that the villagers were resentful and little wonder that they listened to Joe with interest.

"I reckon," Joe said stolidly, his small eyes alight in his ageless face, "I reckon I can build an electric generator as'll supply all the normal needs of the village." He then sat down without another explanatory word.

The villagers cheered, briefly, and filed out of the hall, perfectly satisfied with the outcome of the meeting. They smiled at each other and began to talk of other things. It didn't occur to them to question Joe's project at all. The fact that power stations, like Rome, are not built in a day, nor without the aid of engineers and scientists, coupled very often with a few million pounds and the benign backing of Nature in the shape of some great water torrent, did not worry

The vicar was the first to notice anything was wrong. He noticed it sharply and very loudly

them in the least. Hadn't Joe already given them wireless, an electric well, the internal combustion engine? What was so different about a power station?

Maychester power station was the most difficult job of work Joe had ever undertaken. Many were the setbacks and discouragements, but Joe overcame them all, for in a curious way he felt duty bound to the task; he had sold Mrs. Jameson an electric flat-iron, and if she were not supplied with electricity to go with it, it would seem almost like selling something under false pretences.

It took Joe six months to complete the power station. He erected three large windmills in the yard at the back of his garage. These, by a cunning arrangement of gears, supplied rotary motion to a gigantic generator which he had bought cheaply from a visiting fair.

The week after the power station was completed, Joe arranged a demonstration in the Hayley Memorial Hall. He floodlit the building from a couple of 500-watt lamps in cocoa-tin reflectors, and inside, to augment normal lighting, he festooned coloured fairy lamps from the ceiling.

The vicar, the Reverend James Newby, who seldom caught his flock so conveniently together, used the occasion as a vehicle for a little sermon, agreeing to perform the initiation ceremony by ironing one of his best shirts with Mrs. Jameson's electric iron.

Joe, the vicar, the vicar's wife, and Mr. and Mrs. Jameson sat behind a table on a raised dais, facing practically the whole population of Maychester, not excepting domestic animals. On the table, besides the flat-iron, a blanket and the vicar's shirt, were an all-mains wireless, now, playing soft music, an electric fire, burning dully, and an electric fan trying to blow it out. It was an all-mains occasion and looked like being a great success, for there had been a fair wind all day and the windmills were turning at good speed.

But as the vicar got to the middle of his sermon the wind began to strengthen. With this stronger wind, the voltage from Joe's generator increased, the wireless played more loudly, the vicar spoke louder still to drown the wireless, the lamps increased their intensity, the fire burned more brightly, the fan accelerated, driving coloured ribbons out in front, and the flat-iron, standing on its asbestos stand, got hotter and hotter.

WITH an unusual flash of inspiration, the Reverend James Newby was delivering a chatty sermon likening the coming of Joe's electric light to the Advent of the Light which would illuminate the path of righteousness to the church door on a Sunday evening—Joe had already promised to hang a strong lamp over the lych-gate of the churchyard.

By the time the vicar had reached the harmless little joke which was to be the cue for picking up the flat-iron and getting busy on his shirt, the wind had increased to gale force, the fire was white-hot, the fan had already propelled itself three times across the table and been pushed back nervously by the vicar's wife, while the unbearably bright lights in the ceiling were beginning to go out with a series of alarming bangs. Nobody really noticed these things—the sermon had put them all partly to sleep—until the vicar took hold of the iron and let out a most unreverend yell, flinging the iron forward on to the blanket and stuffing his fingers into his mouth.

Joe leapt up and made to switch off the wireless—but it went off of its own accord just before his hand reached the switch, giving forth a little moan and a wisp of smoke.

A number of things happened then: the unrestrained fan, now that Mrs. Newby was busy restraining her husband, vibrated uncannily across the table, fanned the smouldering blanket into flames and crashed to the floor, while the

Courting couples were severely put out. The spinney was bathed in fierce light

fire suddenly discharged brilliant blue sparks and all the lamps went out.

Fortunately, the caretaker, a stranger to the village, with no belief in modern marvels, had been prepared for the failure of Joe's lighting and before real panic had started he had a dozen oil lamps burning brightly at the back of the hall. The fire was extinguished and Joe went sadly home to find that with the final failure of the mains, the winding on his generator had gone up in smoke. He subsequently discovered that he had missed out an essential unit which for ever afterwards he referred to as "that danged regulator," whose function it was to keep the voltage at a steady maximum level irrespective of wind strength.

The vicar, who professed faith in all things, never again had faith in electric irons and never allowed one inside the vicarage. But apart from this, Joe was forgiven his justifiable error, and when the generator was repaired Maychester went all electric. Street lights appeared on trees at the important parts of the High Street, and most of the cottages had at least one electric bulb hanging from the low ceiling.

Also, Joe installed a film projector in the gentlemen's cloakroom at the back of the Hayley Memorial Hall, with the lens peeping through a discreet hole in the wall.

JOE ran the power and lighting of the village with great efficiency, until, quite suddenly, somebody decided to build a factory to help the export drive, and without any preliminary rumours or counter-rumours a notice appeared in the window of the sub-Post Office saying quite simply that mains electricity was now available by underground cable to anyone who wanted it installed.

"They must have laid it on when we thought they was putting the sewers down to that there factory!" Sol Green informed the public bar of the Fighting Cocks in furious tones. "Well, what I say is, they can keep it."

And that seemed to be the attitude of the village, for there was not a single applicant for the installation of the mains, as Joe learned one morning when a Mr. Gabriel Clark, representing the Electricity Board, called at the little garage.

"You'll have to strip out your entire installation, Mr. Guthrie," said the pink-faced official, eyeing Joe's rig disdainfully.

"I don't see that," Joe said, stolidly. "If they want my electricity instead of yours——"

"You're charging quarter the standard rate, what do you expect?"

"All right, I'll put it up," Joe said.

Mr. Clark thought for a moment, then he said: "You're contravening the safety code of the Electrical Wiring and Installation Laws."

"Huh?" said Joe.

"You're using cable incorrectly insulated—all external electrical wiring has to be covered in lead sheathing. You're using rubber. Of course, if you intend to rewire the whole circuit——"

"All right, mister," said Joe, who knew when he was beaten. "You win."

The Electricity Board did not insist on the removal of Joe's equipment until they had completed the installation of their own. Elegant concrete lamp standards were erected along each side of the High Street, and even in Lovers' Lane, a place traditionally entitled to darkness and which Joe had studiously avoided. Joe's wiring and fittings were stripped out at his own expense and dumped in his garage.

To mark the occasion of the great Switch On, the church and the war memorial were to be floodlit, and several important personages connected with one of the ministries were to be present.

That dark, wet and windy evening in early September, Joe sat at the back of his garage, morosely watching his three windmills, still harnessed to the generator, spinning merrily and manufacturing electricity for which nobody had a use. Joe was unhappy for more than one reason. Not only had he been treated offhandedly by the Board, but he had, by performing this public service and neglecting his own business, lost quite a lot of money.

As he looked at his windmills and listened to the efficient purring of the generator, he wondered if anyone would want to buy it, and decided that no one would. It was not what you might call a mobile or portable power station, for it was rooted heart and soul in Joe's back yard, and to uproot it would be to destroy it. Joe sighed.

AT nine o'clock there came a thunderous knock on the front doors of the garage. When Joe opened them, he noticed that the village was still in darkness. Mr. Gabriel Clark, of the Electricity Board, stood there with one of his senior engineers. There was a noticeable change in his attitude towards Joe.

"I wonder if you could help me, Mr. Guthrie?"

"What is it?" Joe said.

"Our wiring seems to have failed—can you get sufficient power from your generator just for the floodlighting of the church? I'll get the war memorial disconnected and the street and house wiring——"

"All my wiring's out," Joe reminded him

"That doesn't make any difference. We've got a junction box right here outside your garage. All you have to do is hook up to that."

Joe yawned. "All right. When you're ready—will tomorrow do?"

Mr. Clark stabbed a frantic glance down the High Street towards the church. "You don't understand—Sir Osbert Stilgood from the Ministry will be here at any moment, together with the Chairman of the Electricity Board. It's most distressing——"

"Come on in," Joe said, picking up a coil of wire from the floor.

Joe connected the output from his generator to the junction box outside. When the engineer switched on, they could see the light shining up from behind the trees on Pound Hill, behind which stood the church.

"It's not terribly bright," Mr. Clark said, "but it will have to do."

Joe was struck with an idea. "You get that memorial hooked on," he said. "I'll give it a bit of extra juice."

Mr. Clark and the engineer looked at each

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Haggard and exhausted, but still eager with excitement, Havoc watched Meg draw back the covering. The Ste. Odile treasure lay before them

TIGER IN THE SMOKE

by
MARGERY ALLINGHAM
ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

Meg, left alone on the cliff-top, was glad to have help in unwrapping her treasure. She didn't know that she was face to face with the killer . . .

JACK HAVOC WAS A DESPERATE MAN. He had escaped from jail, murdered five people—and still he had not got what he wanted. What he wanted was the legendary Ste. Odile treasure.

Havoc heard of the treasure during a wartime raid on a house on the French coast. Martin Elginbrodde, the young officer leading the raid, said it was in the house (where he had lived as a child) and that, if he did not survive the war, he would indicate its location in a letter. The letter would remain hidden unless his wife, Meg, remarried; then it would go to her husband.

When Havoc, in jail after the war, learned that Meg *was* to remarry, he knew he had to get at that letter. Escaping in thick fog, he was driven to murder many times in his efforts to find it.

Meg, alarmed at the mysterious interest in her late husband's affairs, called in her cousin, Albert Campion, the criminologist, and Chief Inspector Charlie Luke, of Scotland Yard. Her father, saintly old Canon Avril, handled the business in his own way. He thought he knew the identity of the convict—he remembered a ne'er-do-well boy, Johnny Cash, who had left the neighbourhood years before.

And then, fate dealt Havoc his worst blow. Geoffrey Levett, Meg's fiancé, was mistaken for him in the fog by a gang of street musicians—men who had also been on the raid, who also wanted their cut of the treasure. Levett, taken prisoner, learned the full story before he was rescued.

And back in the rectory where Meg lived, he also found the letter. Elginbrodde had left it with a lodger, sworn to secrecy. Together with Meg, Campion, and Campion's wife, Amanda, he set off to Ste. Odile in France to find the still unknown treasure. Havoc, they thought, was beaten. . . .

But they had not banked on Canon Avril's curious compassion for criminals. Knowing that Mrs. Cash, mother of the scapegrace whom he remembered, would probably be shielding the convict, he saw a light flickering in the church adjacent to her cottage; Johnny Cash, alias Jack Havoc, was still seeking the letter.

The canon, unafraid, went into the church to reason with him. Then, after inadvertently telling him where the treasure was to be found, he was stabbed.

FINAL INSTALMENT

The Treasure On The Cliff

THIRTY-FIVE hours later, in the morning, when the sun was shining through the newly cleaned windows of his office as blandly as if no such thing as a London fog had ever existed, Charlie Luke sat at his desk in Crumb Street and considered the situation with that complete detachment which arrives with exhaustion.

Thirty-five hours. Two nights and a day. Thirty-five hours of rushed and unrelenting

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Britain's sheikhs hit the jackpot

by HARRY HOPKINS

In the booming Arab oil lands which Britain still controls, riches flow into the coffers of rulers like Bahrain's Sheikh. Yet they cling tenaciously to the simple life of the desert

"WELL," SAID THE RADIO operator, shoving his bag into the airport bus and climbing in after it, "that's another day over, anyway." He looked at his watch. "Two o'clock Friday," he said, "and home to Ma . . . and if those blighters haven't charged my car battery. . . ."

"I hope my bike hasn't got a puncture," said the navigator in the next seat.

The shallow waters of the Persian Gulf shone splendidly on either side of us—a painter's palette of blues and greens—as the B.O.A.C. coach started across the long causeway and bridge that link the tiny airport island of Muharraq to its parent island of Bahrain.

Thirty miles to the west lies the coast of Ibn Saud's Arabia—you can see the glow in the sky at night. Ahead rises the strange, jag-toothed skyline of Manama, the island's capital, white walls gleaming in the sun, high square buildings punctuated here and there by elegant Persian "wind towers," cluttered along their flat rooftops with what appear to be storks' nests but are, in fact, palm-leaf canopies where, on torrid summer nights, the dripping citizens seek a breath of air and the possibility of sleep.

A forest of masts grows around the pier, stacked high along both its edges with boxes and bags and barrels, as the long rows of Arab dhows load and unload. Everywhere new buildings are going up, constructed in Bahrain's ancient-modern style, from coral cut from the bed of the sea, coral rock for the framework of pillars, flat coral sheets as "cladding."

To the B.O.A.C aircrew in the coach, this small, sandy island is little more than a pause for breath on the route from London to Tokyo, Singapore or Sydney, a flyers' oasis in the middle of the two thousand odd miles of sand that stretch from Karachi to Cairo. But to the people of the Gulf, the island of Bahrain today stands for a great deal more than that. It is the heart and hub of the great Arabian oil boom, the centrepiece of the most astonishing transformation scene of Middle East history.

For in these primitive Arab lands that border the Persian Gulf lie two-thirds of all the world's proved oil resources outside the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. Here, in these waterless strips of sand, their very boundaries often still undetermined, lie the wells of power of the western world. And now, as Persia withdraws from the oil race, yet more millions of dollars are being poured out in an effort to step up even further an expansion already without precedent in the whole fantastic annals of oil.

It is a little known, scarcely acknowledged partnership, in which American finance and skill have joined hands with British political tutelage, still strong in this part of the Middle East. Most

The Sheikh of Bahrain seeks progress, but refuses to be Westernized. His favourite sport is falconry

As the Sheikh of Bahrain slowly descends the steps from his "majlis," police form up opposite his big American car

Street scene in Bahrain. Harry Hopkins, who took these photographs, describes the prosperous island as the Clapham Junction of the oil rush

of the sheikhdoms, like Bahrain, are "in special treaty relationship" with Great Britain, which has guaranteed them protection in return for the right to manage their foreign relations and make laws covering their foreigners.

No caliph of Baghdad can hold a candle to the modern oilman when he really sets his mind to it—and Bahrain today comes straight out of some twentieth-century Arabian Nights. Gently nosing down narrow bazaar streets that look like something out of the Bible come huge, shining Pontiacs and Buicks, Arabs in flowing headdress at the wheel, dance music pouring from the radio. Air-conditioned homes and offices rub shoulders with primitive date palm-leaf huts. You see soft-slippered women scuttling across the streets, covered from head to foot in black cloaks to hide them from the gaze of men—and then you turn the corner and you find the latest anti-insect "fog" machine, spraying gammaxene and D.D.T. in the tow of a public health department vehicle.

This was Wednesday morning, and in the big room over the Gate of Bahrain—Manama's handsome new civic centre—"H.H. the Ruler" was holding his regular weekly "majlis," when any of his 110,000 subjects may approach him with respects, complaints or petitions.

Suddenly there was a flurry in the police station opposite and half a dozen policemen, hurriedly adjusting their red turbans, ran across the street to form up in a guard of honour at the foot of the stairs. On the upper balcony a door had opened. The Sheikh was leaving.

Rises At Dawn To Pray

Slowly he came down the stairs, a few paces ahead of his escort, a short, fiercely black-bearded figure, enveloped in voluminous white Arab robes—His Highness Sheikh Sir Sulman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, K.C.I.E.

The Sheikh embodies in his person the paradox of Bahrain today, and of the other Arab lands caught up in the throes of the oil revolution. A conscientious, modern-minded ruler, he seeks for his people all the help that modern science can give, yet he himself clings tenaciously to the simple life of his fathers, the life of the desert, rising at dawn to pray, eating Arab style on cushions on the floor, hawking from his hunting lodge in the southern wastes of the island, a falcon on his wrist.

He speaks no English, has declined repeated invitations to visit Britain and Europe and resolutely refuses to go up in an aeroplane, yet he knows the English names of most of the parts of a motor car engine. He welcomes to his island the air travellers of the world, yet—outside European messes—B.O.A.C.'s rest house is the only place on the island where liquor may be sold (strictly to travellers only). For the rest the law of Mahomet prevails—and the possession of liquor is a crime of some magnitude.

Advised How To Spend

For most of the year the Sheikh lives in his Rafaa Palace, a castellated, faintly Hollywoodesque structure planted down in the desert in the centre of the island, and marked only by a small fingerpost neatly red-lettered "Palace." At this particular moment the Sheikh was preparing to go to the landing stage to welcome his cousin, the Sheikh of Kuwait.

The Sheikh of Kuwait was very fond of Bahrain—it would be his fourth visit in one year. For Kuwait—ninety miles by ninety miles of quite waterless sand at the head of the Persian Gulf—had struck it rich, and as his oil royalties shot up to £50,000,000 a year, the sheikh travelled down to Bahrain—the oil pioneer of the Gulf—to pick up tips on how to spend the money wisely. Already he had embarked on the construction of what will be the biggest sea-water distillation plant in the world.

But the Sheikh of Bahrain had one advantage his cousin could not have: he had Charles Dalrymple Belgrave, for twenty-five years Adviser and right-hand man to the sheikhs of Bahrain, and today Grand Vizier to the oil-man's Caliph. In a quiet, self-effacing way, Belgrave is a remarkable man.

He received me in his office in the "Advisorate"—a tall, bronzed, handsome man of fifty-eight, with a suave manner and a bow-tie, Hollywood's dream of a British empire builder. When, a young British officer, graduate of the Great War Camel Corps and of service in the Sudan, Belgrave first came to Bahrain twenty-five years ago, he found a long, narrow island of sand rising out of the shallow waters of the Gulf, famed for its steam-bath climate, its pearl fisheries and the warm freshwater springs that bubble up out of the sand.

The oilmen invaded Bahrain in 1930, four years after Belgrave's arrival. In the barren desert in the centre of the island, where not a green or living thing was to be seen, appeared like a mirage a town of white, air-conditioned bungalows, with privet-hedged gardens and tree-lined avenues. To grow a tree in Awali you had to drill a hole through the rock with a pneumatic drill, then run a water pipe to the roots. To the east of Awali rose the spindly stacks and tormented tubes of a refinery.

As the oil royalties began to flow in, the Sheikh's revenues rocketed. Belgrave had been preparing for this moment. Already the delicate process of modernizing a feudal Arab sheikhdom had been set on foot. Regular law courts, with a printed book of island laws, had replaced the arbitrary and absolute personal justice which still survived—and survives—in other sheikhdoms. (A few months ago a new Sheikh of Qatar celebrated his accession by chopping off the hand of a man found stealing in the bazaar. Another prisoner, found guilty of distilling alcohol, was flogged, then led around the town with his pot still over his head.)

Opposition To Progress

Now a detailed annual budget was prepared and presented to the people. It showed that one-third of the oil royalties went in "Allowances to the Ruling Family." But the rest of the revenues was expended on a variety of social purposes. And a reserve fund was built up against less prosperous days.

It was not always easy. The first proposal for schools met with furious opposition. And when the first census was launched in 1941, the wildest rumours about its sinister purpose spread through the island. In some villages strong objection was taken to enumerators' inquiries about the names of women. Most of the people had no idea how old they were. Some husbands described the "occupation" of their wives as "eating and sleeping."

"We Arabs," a Bahraini said to me, "are apt to be rather difficult people to deal with. But we are very happy with our Belgraves. They

If only . . .

IF YOU COULD do more of what you like and less of what you must . . . if you could take longer holidays, and oftener . . . if you could rush rather less and rest a little more. If, if – there's no bigger word than If.

But duty ties you down, the pace of life grows faster and leaves but little time for the relaxation we all need. No wonder if we sometimes feel jaded and the will to work or play slows down!

Then it is that Milo can be a great help and benefit. It helps to sustain the balance between energy spent and energy gained. Day by day, each day a little, it supplements the intake of those nutritive and energy-giving elements which are now known to be most beneficial in helping to restore and sustain nervous and physical energy. It makes a most delicious drink, and taken regularly for a few weeks it can do you nothing but good.

Commonsense tells that energy stolen by perhaps months of overwork and worry is not to be restored overnight. But take a cup at mid-morning and another, perhaps at night, for a few weeks, and then you will probably be drinking Milo not because you need it, but because you like it.

MILO Cup of Health

to strengthen the young and comfort the old.

¼ lb. 1/6, ½ lb. 2/6, 1 lb. 4/6

And it is made by **NESTLÉ'S**

I'm bursting out

to tell you...

. . . that
W. H. Smith & Son
have the finest selection
of Easter cards
and gifts.
Call at any W.H.S. shop
and have a look at them,
W.H.S. cards and gifts
are just right
for friends and family,
purse and pocket . . .

W. H. SMITH & SON

FOR EASTER CARDS AND GIFTS

BRANCHES THROUGHOUT ENGLAND AND WALES

know how to put things to us. We hope they will stay with us for many years yet. . . ."

There is every possibility that that may happen, for in twenty-five years Charles Dalrymple Belgrave has learned to look on this barren steam-bath island as his home, and England as a place he visits on leaves at two-yearly intervals. As Bahrain's Director of Education, his wife shares his enthusiasm; their son, James, is studying classical Arabic in London, and already the Bahrainis with whom he hobnobs on his vacations are confidently expecting that he will one day take over where his father leaves off.

Flowers On Porch

Crimson bougainvillaea creeps over the porch of the "Advisorate," giving it a homely look not repeated in the large, square-pillared building which stands opposite, jutting out commandingly into the sea. This is the office of Her Britannic Majesty's representative in Bahrain, the Political Agent. It is also the headquarters of Sir Rupert Hay, the Political Resident, Persian Gulf.

Sir Rupert's parish is unique and immense. It stretches from Kuwait at the head of the Gulf, down through Qatar, the waterless peninsula that sticks up like a thumb below Bahrain, down through the seven sheikhdoms of the Trucial Coast to Muscat and Oman.

Sir Rupert had just gone down the Gulf to sign a new treaty with the Sultan of Muscat. Muscat has a British Foreign Minister. Qatar has just taken a British Adviser, an ex-R.A.F. wing-commander. Now a British airline, Gulf Aviation, in which B.O.A.C. has a controlling interest, is linking the sheikhdoms with a regular air service.

So Sir Rupert's sheikhs are men with hope high in their hearts today. They have seen what happened to their kinsman, the Sheikh of Kuwait. And they are confident that they, too, have hit the jackpot. For a thousand miles, from Fao, at the head of the Gulf, where since December tankers have been tying up at the jetty to fill up from the new booming South Iraq field, to Muscat at the mouth of the Gulf, the oil-prospecting men are on the job.

From the air over Bahrain the gas flares blaze along the Arabian coast like pillars of fire. From the Saudi Arabian field at Damman, nearly opposite Bahrain, a £20,000,000, 1,068-mile pipeline runs across four countries to the Syrian coast.

Another pipeline from the Arabian field runs eastwards, dips under the Persian Gulf, and ends in the growing refinery on the east coast of the island of Bahrain. Bahrain, in fact, is the Clapham Junction of the oil rush. B.O.A.C.'s fine, big, air-conditioned rest house at Manama is always full of oil men, coming and going about the world.

In his six years on the island as B.O.A.C.'s station manager, Geoffrey Parker has watched his revenues soar until he can now boast of selling more tickets than any station east of Cairo. And now, as the Comet comes into service this year, his steaming island will be brought within eight hours' flying time of London.

Weekend Trips

Bahrain's success is striking enough to excite the envy even of the great King Ibn Saud. Recently he imposed a tax of £8 a head on every foreigner residing in Arabia who went over to shop or weekend in Bahrain. But, tax or no tax, enough of the four thousand American oilmen who work over there are still making the three-hour trip to keep the Sheikh and his people smiling.

And rather than face the uncertainties of the Saudi Arabia customs, so many Persian Gulf merchants are preferring to hold their goods in Bahrain that three new warehouses are being built, and the island is getting rich on its two per cent transhipment duty.

The truth is that, in contrast to some other Arab states, the people of Bahrain have learned how to adapt themselves to the hustling new world in which they find themselves plunged.

There was, for instance, the matter of the elections. Bahrain is, of course, in many ways still feudal. The land is owned by a very few families. The Sheikh's uncle is president of the municipality of Manama, his younger brother of the municipality of Muharraq; a third relative is police superintendent, and others are judges.

It can be understood, therefore, that elections were apt to be something of a formality, in which seats went to persons considered "entitled" by their family and rank.

So it was until 1950. Then, to the horror of their elders, a group of young Bahrainis, who had listened to radio reports of the British elections, suddenly got themselves nominated and began to campaign around the island in loudspeaker cars on a "Bigger-and-Better Bahrain" programme.

To the general astonishment, the young men—they were all under thirty—found themselves sitting on the Councils.

I talked to one of the leaders of this up-and-coming "Young Bahraini" party in his office in the main street of Manama. His name is Achmed Kanoo, and he is one of the leading merchants of Bahrain.

A handsome figure in a flowing Arab headdress, he addressed me in impeccable English across a desk elegantly furnished with green plastic fittings. Outside stood the enormous Fraser-Nash automobile which he had brought back from his last trip to the United States.

Proud Of Bahrain

Achmed was as zealous for the reputation of Bahrain as any American Chamber of Commerce booster. "You must get some good photographs," he said. "Not like the postcards we have in the bazaar. They ought to be banned. They are disgraceful." One showed, it seemed, a collection of washing spread out over rocks to dry. "Bahrain Laundry," was the caption. "Why!" snorted Achmed, "we have at least three fine up-to-date laundries."

When the Egyptian mob was set loose, when the Persians just across the Gulf turned on their oil company to make a nationalist holiday, those in authority felt just one moment of anxiety for the peace of Bahrain. The Persians, after all, were the island's biggest foreign community—and 9,000 imported pictures of Dr. Mossadeq sold at ten shillings apiece like hot cakes.

But the Bahrainis are not particularly fond of their Persians—who are now claiming the return of Bahrain, which they assert is a Persian island. And when the Bahrain oil company put an extra rupee a day into the pay packets of their labourers, the moment of danger was well past.

Under its wise Sheikh and his equally wise Adviser, the small island of Bahrain is today establishing a pattern of steady and ordered progress which could bring peace and stability to the smouldering, poverty-stricken lands of the Middle East. THE END

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Beginning—or end?

YOU would like to do just what you like, wouldn't you? You resent interference. You long to be free and independent.

Maybe I, too, want to do just what I like. But supposing our paths crossed, and my wishes interfered with yours? Where is your independence then—or my freedom?

No one is really free. No one can ever be wholly independent. I think we are all in the same boat. Maybe the truth is that my freedom ends where yours begins.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

ANONA WINN, RADIO'S BRIGHT SPARK

Continued from page 9

had musical inclinations, too, but got no further than singing arias in the drawing-room, and her ambitions were sublimated into a resolve to foster any possible talent in her child.

So Anona was encouraged from the very start. When it looked as though her hands would never grow big enough for a concert pianist, she was taken to sing to the great Melba at the Albert Street Conservatorium in Melbourne. The upshot was that Anona, then sixteen, was admitted to the conservatorium with a scholarship that would have taken her on to Italy. But the following year Anona blotted her copybook by going into the chorus of a musical comedy during her holidays.

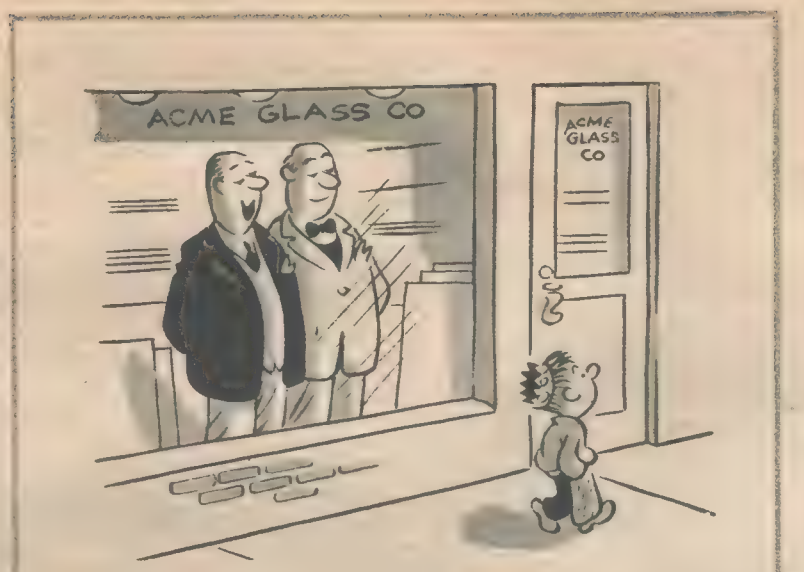
In London—But Broke

She then joined a repertory company and played all types of parts, including the Negro maid in *Madame X*. The chance of studying under a great singing master in Italy vanished, and Anona went to India, playing musical comedy. The management had to deposit enough money for a return ticket to Australia before taking a minor out of the country. She used the money for a ticket to Britain, and arrived in London quite broke, but determined to be a concert singer.

As time went by, Anona forsook this ambition. The big impresarios would book only the stars, and West End producers could not abide arias. C. B. Cochran himself, when she sang "Lo! Hear the Gentle Lark," wanted to know if she could dance. Anona fell back on witty and popular songs for the halls and cabarets.

Anona was broadcasting in New York in 1939 when the war broke out. She returned home—by now she regarded Britain as her home—and was able to help Vivian Ellis, the composer, to produce a number of shows for the Navy at Plymouth. That association stood Anona in good stead, because when she accidentally bumped into Ellis in Bond Street in 1946 he immediately said: "Anona, darling, I've got the very part for you."

The part was that of Nanny in Cochran's *Bless the Bride*. But before



"A fine little youngster, that! He breaks on the average two windows a week in his neighbourhood"

she got it, Cochran, who had once asked if she could dance, now wanted to know if she could sing.

Her life today is a scramble to keep up with a succession of cabaret and concert engagements, between her bread and butter dates with the B.B.C. The new series of *Twenty Questions* is due to begin on July 27.

Twenty Questions is one of the series that the B.B.C. insists must be live, but that rule, Anona finds, makes it difficult for the team members to take part in a West End production: it would be practically impossible to find another show like *Bless the Bride*, which allowed her to leave the theatre in the middle of a performance, broadcast, and return in time for the next entrance.

Even with *The Bride* it was touch and go. After coming off the stage in the first act, Anona had just ten minutes in which to get out of Nanny's high-neck buttoned dress, apron, white cap, bustle and a series of petticoats, into a black net frock and multi-coloured sequin jacket, and dash to the stage door, where a car was ticking over for a wild ride across Trafalgar Square to the Paris Cinema in Lower Regent Street.

Anona could never manage to change her footwear in her dressing-room, so people in buses at traffic stops were frequently surprised to see the star of *Twenty Questions* hitch up her skirt and pull off elastic-sided boots. She often arrived with only a few seconds to spare. Only once in the two and a half years' run of the show was she late.

There are cynics who will never believe that *Twenty Questions* is not faked. How, they demand, is it possible for Jack Train to get an object like "Winnie The Pooh" in one guess?

Curiously, team members work to no pre-arranged routine or plan of campaign. There is no captain, and they have no set questions. As Anona says: "One just couldn't, with people being whimsical, punning, and having wild shots in the dark." But they do work as a team; there is no rivalry, no marks being scored up to people for their individual successes; and there has never been a cross word or argument among them.

But each has a very personal style of guessing. Jack Train, with his old *Itma* background, cannot help linking what he hears with what has gone before. Jack is the pun merchant and the rhymester. Anona once got "pylon" in seventeen. Jack got the next in one by rhyming "nylon." He got "Winnie The Pooh" because the object before had been "dry shampoo."

Richard Dimbleby guesses only as a last resort: he will approach a subject deductively, by a sort of abstruse mental formula understood only by himself. Joy Adamson gets her results by sheer assiduousness—sticking at an object and ferreting.

Clues In The Laughter

As for Anona, "Words convey certain images to me," she says. "Then I see a picture of the object." When she got "The missing arms of Venus," somebody leaned over and asked: "What did you see—Venus or the arms?"

Knowing Ian Messiter, their producer, who chooses the objects, team members are usually ready whenever he tries to put one across on them. In this respect they are helped by the laughter of the audience, which takes on a "knowing" quality if the object is a trick one.

On New Year's Eve, Jack Train got "haggis" in three or four. A little later they were told that the next object was animal and vegetable. Something in the laughter prompted Anona to ask: "Is it another haggis?" It was.

But one of her "solos" really put Anona on the spot. Told that the object was animal, she asked: "Would I like to meet it?" The audience sniggered, then became uproarious when she asked: "Will I be likely to meet it tonight?" She was told that she would not only meet it that night, but would be quite as likely to keep it warm in bed with a hot-water bottle.

Anona, who is a widow and lives with her mother in a flat near Knightsbridge, got redder and redder. The audience doubled up and, in her confusion, Anona went right off the track. She never guessed that object. It was cold feet. THE END

MAYCHESTER SEES THE LIGHT

Continued from page 17

other, shrugged, and switched the memorial lighting into circuit while Joe went through to his generator again. Before they could see the results, the headlights of a powerful car cleaved into the village from the Walden Road.

"Mr. Guthrie!" Mr. Clark ran through the garage, calling. Joe was busy with a screwdriver on his generator. "I'll have to leave it to you. They've arrived. We're going up to the church—switch on within two minutes if you can."

"That'll be all right," Joe muttered.

A DISGRUNTLED chairman of the Electricity Board was just about to demand from Mr. Clark the reason for the singularly unlit village when the lights came on. They glared up from the reflectors on to the highest point of the green steeple and shot off into low clouds, throwing a bright illumination on the whole countryside.

"That's wonderful!" the chairman exclaimed.

"Magnificent!" said Sir Osbert, shielding his eyes.

But Mr. Clark and the engineers were watching the brilliant lamps anxiously, for it was obvious to them that it was a magnificence that could not possibly last. In fact, by some amazing means, Joe Guthrie's generator was overrunning the big lamps. The war memorial on Pound Hill was also brightly lit and the white light was gradually turning blue with its intensity.

The Important People stood by their car, which was drawn up against the low stone wall of the old churchyard. Most of the villagers were grouped noisily in the streets, with the children hanging from trees and roof tops. They were beginning to see that the Grid electricity was far more effective than Joe Guthrie's could ever be, and the many resentful ones, including Sol Green and his boss, fell silent as they strained their eyes into the bright beams of light.

"Reminds me o' the time Joe first got his gear running—when he blew out all the lamps in Hayley Hall," Sol said.

And Mr. Jameson said: "Ar, these 'ere don't run on wind, old 'un."

But they did. When Joe arrived at the churchyard, Mr. Clark intercepted him. "You're giving us too much power, Guthrie—can you cut it down a bit?" he whispered.

Joe shook his head. "Not unless you've got some influence with the Almighty," he said. "I've took out that danged regulator—if you want to cut it down a bit you'll have to switch in a bigger load."

"Put on the street lamps," Mr. Clark told his engineer.

The street lamps went on, and the floodlighting diminished slightly—but not much, for the wind was getting stronger. Mr. Clark licked his lips nervously, but returned his boss's admiring smile. He said: "I'll tell the villagers to turn on the cottage lights as well, just to show that we've got everything under control."

"An excellent suggestion. Excellent."

An announcement was made asking all the villagers to go home and switch on their lights. Lights beamed forth from all the little houses, and what with the reflection of the flood-lighting on the low clouds and the overrun street lamps, it was possible to read a newspaper anywhere in the village, while courting couples who had been driven from Lovers' Lane out to the spinney still felt self-conscious. Twenty miles away, across the fens, the lights of Maychester were visible, and navigators out at sea hurriedly checked their bearings, shrugged and blamed the Northern Lights.

The Chairman of the Electricity Board and the titled gentleman from the Ministry did not suspect that the power was being generated only a hundred yards or so away from them, but the villagers soon learned the truth and a great cheer went up for Joe Guthrie—which the Important People acknowledged with modest smiles and bows before climbing into their car and driving away.

Mr. Clark wiped his forehead and shook hands with Joe as the car vanished along the Walden Road. Almost immediately, every light in the village went out. The effect was startling. For several minutes nobody could see anything; then a cry went up: "Fire! Fire!"

From the lower end of the High Street a great fire had sprung up. Flames went skywards and smoke and sparks came billowing across the thatched roofs.

"Your generator!" said Mr. Clark.

"My garage!" said Joe, and began to run.

JOE GUTHRIE'S garage was burned right out and nothing remained. But Joe was not distressed. In a way it was an honourable and colourful finish to a magnificent venture. Besides, it cleared up an economic problem, for the place was insured for rather more than it would take to get started again. On the Saturday morning following the grand display, Joe sat in the office of Mr. Gabriel Clark at Market Walden.

"Let me say straight away that we owe you a great deal," Mr. Clark said. "And, of course, I shall recommend that you get adequate compensation for the loss of your equipment."

"Thank you," said Joe, mentally congratulating himself.

"And there's one other thing," Mr. Clark said. "You seem to know a great deal about electricity: I wondered if you would like to take responsibility for the Maychester electric lighting? You know, resident maintenance engineer. Look after the transformer house and so on."

Joe nodded, happily. He had felt resentful of the Grid system right from the beginning, because he had always been the one to bring progress to Maychester and he wanted it to go on being that way. Now the lights of Maychester could still depend on Joe Guthrie.

"I reckon that's a good suggestion," Joe said soberly. "So long as it don't interfere with me own business when I get it rebuilt."

"It won't," Mr. Clark assured him. "The main duty entails keeping the flower-bed weeded in the garden of the transformer house."

"When do I start?" said Joe.

"We'll have the lights on in Maychester by Monday," Mr. Clark promised.

And they did. But never again did they shine with the exciting brilliance of that inaugural ceremony, and never was there that glorious uncertainty of not knowing exactly when the village would be plunged into darkness. Indeed, after Joe had rebuilt his business, life in Maychester became rather monotonous and the villagers looked to Joe for fresh diversions.

"Ar, you wait, old 'un," said Sol Green to his boss. "Joe'll think up something."

Sol was right, for only recently, to the great delight of everyone in Maychester, Joe Guthrie has discovered television. THE END

WONDERFUL NEWS—

More Fresh Homes this year!

"But, Jane, what a difference! Your home seems ten times brighter and fresher than it did."

"Ah, so you've noticed. I thought you would. This lovely freshness is all due to ZAL, my dear. You simply must try it."

WHAT IS ZAL? Zal is the disinfectant with the scent of real pines—no other disinfectant has the same sweet smell. And here's its secret—ZAL spreads its healthy freshness *instantly*. ZAL destroys germs wherever they lurk, yet it is harmless to everything else. Get ZAL today—like thousands of other clever housewives.

spreads its healthy freshness *instantly*

ONLY 1/-
a big value bottle

S FOR SHOPPING — Z FOR ZAL

He had BAD SKIN

NOW IT'S CLEAR AND HEALTHY!

LETTERS from soldiers, housewives, schoolgirls, businessmen—all sorts of people from every station in life, testify to the amazing effectiveness of Valderma in relieving spots, pimples, rashes and eczema.

Two Antiseptics. Valderma is a white, creamy, non-greasy skin balm. It contains two antiseptics which penetrate deep into the skin pores and kill off germs. Its oil-in-water emulsion base allows the skin to breathe and septic matter to filter away. Your skin trouble disappears, often in only a few days.

Get some Valderma today and say goodbye to *your* skin trouble. At chemists. Tubes 1/9d. Jars 2/4d. and 3/11d.

A SOLDIER *He is only one of the many different types of skin sufferers who write, in gratitude, for the quick relief Valderma skin balm has brought them.*

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NO POLICE ACTION

Continued from page 8

hole. Somewhere, I reckon, there is the best part of sixty thousand to be found. That's worth taking a chance on."

"I'm surprised you didn't try while she was alive."

"I broke into the place three times," Tasker admitted, "but she was smart enough not to leave it lying around."

"Even when you find it, it still belongs to Sharrard's," Bracegirdle pointed out.

"Technically, yes. But I paid for it with seven years of my life."

"Oh, no! You paid with those seven years for Credland's death."

"Have it your own way. . . . The point is, what are you going to do about it?"

"We'll just have to see, won't we?" Bracegirdle said mildly.

THE superintendent said: "Um, I get the point all right, Bracegirdle. You mean if you take out a warrant to search the place and find nothing, we'll be in a spot?"

"Exactly, sir. We can't go on issuing warrants and taking the place apart without laying ourselves open to the accusation of persecuting a man who's trying to go straight."

"Yes." The superintendent looked thoughtfully at his blotter. "Well, then, for the moment no police action. You'd better just watch him and take what—er—unofficial action you feel justified. I'll back you up if anything goes wrong, but"—he looked up sharply—"don't take it too far, if you know what I mean. No unlawful entry of the house. We're none of us above the law."

"Quite, sir," said Bracegirdle. He was glad the superintendent had specifically used the word "house."

That afternoon he studied the lie of the land. The Myrtle Cottage garden was bounded at the front by the Blackwinter road. At the back were open fields. Eastward was the cottage owned by the woman who had unsuccessfully bid at the sale and at the other side lived Morris, the local joiner and undertaker, who had prematurely made Mrs. Haslam's coffin.

Myrtle Cottage had a small garden and orchard. There was only one outbuilding, a stone shed which Tasker had probably investigated long before this. And inside the house was strictly Tasker's territory, unapproachable save by invitation.

The inspector scowled, bringing before his eyes a picture of the kitchen. Stone flags. A newly tiled fireplace, looking rather out of place. Three big cupboards. A pump on the sink. . . .

A pump! Unused now, he supposed, because town's water had been laid on there many years ago. But a pump indicated a well. Probably not under the house but somewhere in the garden. He considered that.

Later in the evening he went home with Constable Bradley, whose father, as one of Holtrigg's oldest inhabitants, should know something about it. The old man, after much delving in the past, was emphatic that there was such a well, that it was in the garden near the stone shed, and that for safety's sake it had been covered up in years gone by. . . . It was a matter for closer investigation.

So, a few days later, the inspector casually dropped in again to see Tasker, who was busy. The kitchen floor was deep in debris. Tasker explained, with a bland smile, that all these niches between the slabs were unhealthy, collecting water and filth, and that he was preparing to lay down a concrete floor.

"You could have done that without taking up the slabs," the inspector pointed out unkindly. "They'd have given you a nice, solid foundation."

He wandered into the garden.

"There's nothing in the shed," Tasker called after him, "if that's worrying you."

"I just wondered," said Bracegirdle with an absent nod.

But the inspector wasn't interested in the shed. He was looking for a large stone slab, or maybe wooden boards laid close together somewhere around. He found neither. But at one point a rusty mangle and a discarded lawnmower lay close in the rank grass, and above there, he fancied, the ground rang faintly hollow beneath his heavy feet.

Before he left, the inspector noticed that a long ladder was conveniently propped against the big pear tree near Morris's hedge. . . .

At midnight, later that week, he set off alone, armed with spade and torch, leaving his own garden by way of the boundary hedge and approaching Tasker's cottage over the fields. Almost noiselessly he pulled aside the litter of old iron, dug into the nettlebed, and shovelled away the loose soil. He was right about one thing, anyway. Six inches down he came to stout boards.

With two planks shifted, he switched on his torch and peered down. No water, so far as he could see, but a foul stench met his nostrils, and he waited till the air had cleared somewhat. There was an oozy mass of rubbish at the bottom. But about halfway down there seemed to be a cavity in the side. He got up from his knees and went for the ladder.

After satisfying himself that it was in tolerable repair and strong enough to bear his weight, he lowered it into the well. The foot of the ladder sank several inches into the oozy mass before encountering something solid. Just long enough! The top projected only a couple of feet above the mouth of the well.

The inspector committed himself. Very slowly, very carefully. . . . Rung by rung. Nasty if he dropped the torch now. He reached the cavity in the wall and pushed in an exploring hand. It was a biggish hole, but it was disappointingly empty.

BRACEGIRDLE cursed with vexation. He had set such store by that promising hole that his original idea of the well-bottom being Mrs. Haslam's hiding-place had almost gone out of his mind. Still, while he was here, he'd better go down. And he started to go down.

But not very far. . . . For suddenly he lurched alarmingly. He wondered what had happened, then realized that the foot of the ladder had slid another few inches into the ooze. And it was still sinking.

The next lurch took him a couple of feet lower down the shaft. The ooze looked unpleasantly near. The ladder took a third plunge. Possibly, thought the inspector anxiously, the well was bottomless.

It was not. But before the ladder had found its final resting-place, the top rung was six feet below the mouth of the well.

Inspector Bracegirdle was not a man given to panic. He comforted himself with the reflection that by standing on the top rung of the ladder he would be able to reach solid ground. But when

"My sermons send me to sleep"

The plot that shook the realm

NEW HISTORICAL ROMANCE

SINCE her *Gin and Bitters* was published a few years ago, the critics and the public have been waiting for another best-selling historical novel by Jane Lane. Now she has done it again.

DARK CONSPIRACY by JANE LANE is a historical romance with a difference. It tells of the "little people" of Restoration England: Daniel Jolly the chandler, his wife Elizabeth, his daughter Phoebe—and of the sudden, terrifying adventure in which they were involved.

The exclusive serial of this outstanding new novel—with colourful illustrations by Alex Koolman—will begin

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

he tried to do this, he found it impossible. The angle was too acute. He had no desire to overbalance and break his neck.

Standing as far up as he could get, his fingers were still a yard below the level of the garden. And when he daringly wondered if he could climb out, he found that each brick, as he grasped it, left its moorings, covered his upturned face with debris and woodlice, and plunged to the bottom.

After ten minutes spent in furious thought and cautious action, the inspector decided that unless someone pulled him out of the well he would stay there for ever. He looked at his watch. It was now two o'clock. If he called out, Tasker would be asleep. But a dozen of Holtrigg's worthier inhabitants might be wide awake, and if he were discovered in this ignominious predicament, the inspector's name would be an object of contumely for many a long day.

The solution, then, seemed to be to stay there in the well till dawn. Till Tasker began to perform his day-time activities and could be attracted without undue fuss and publicity. Bracegirdle set his teeth. It would not be his first all-night vigil. But on a ladder, in a well! He felt through his pockets. Box of matches . . . thank God for that! Pipe half-full of stale dottle. And his pouch was at home.

"The hell with Tasker!" said the inspector with slow and bitter emphasis.

DAWN broke in a drizzle of rain at six o'clock. But it was half-past eight by the inspector's watch before he heard the creak of a key, the sound of footsteps in the yard.

"Tasker!" he called. "Tasker, come over here and lend me a hand."

Next moment, Tasker's astonished face was silhouetted against the sky. "What the devil," he asked, "are you doing down there?"

"I'll explain later. I'll even apologize later, if you like. But get me out of here. I've been perching on this damned ladder nearly seven hours and I'm half-dead with cramp and cold."

Tasker disappeared. When he came back with a length of rope, Morris the undertaker was with him. They lowered the rope after hitching it round the pear tree, and Tasker's face wore an expression of sanctimonious satisfaction as Bracegirdle slowly dragged himself to safety.

"I didn't know about this well, Inspector," he said, "or I'd have beaten you to it."

Morris, a stringy little man with mild eyes and a gentle manner, was looking from one to the other in astonishment. His presence added nothing to the inspector's pleasure.

"You'll find nothing down there," he growled. "Go down and look for yourself if you doubt my word. But get a longer ladder."

His tone was justifiably bitter. Standing there in the rain-sodden grass, beating his arms and stamping his feet to restore the circulation, he felt that it was the zero-hour of his shame and discomfiture.

"Better come in and I'll make some coffee," Tasker said, and Bracegirdle followed him to the cottage door. So did the flabbergasted Morris.

When they were standing in front of Tasker's newly made fire, Morris remarked in his dry, old voice: "Seems this place breeds eccentricity. Now take the late Mrs. Haslam. . . ."

"Did she climb down wells, too?" asked Tasker.

"Wells? Oh, no! I was thinking about the coffin I made for her."

"I thought that was a lot of gossip," Bracegirdle said.

"No gossip, Inspector! I never put a better bit of elm into a coffin. Beautiful fittings, too. Burnished up like gold, they did."

"Must have cost her plenty," Tasker hazarded, busy with the coffee.

"Well, yes! But then, people have to pay for their whims. And she *was* whimsy, let me tell you! The best of everything! 'And I want a false bottom in it,' she says to me. 'Who ever heard of a false bottom in a coffin?' I says. 'You're hearing it now,' she says."

"And you fitted one?" asked the inspector in a calm, deadly voice.

"You wouldn't think it," said Morris, "but she was a very sentimental lady. You might say romantic. Had a very tragic life, she told me. She'd a lot of love-letters and keepsakes she wouldn't like the world to see after she'd gone. 'I want 'em burying with me,' she said."

The details of Mrs. Haslam's passing were fresh in the inspector's mind, though never till this moment had he related them to the Tasker affair. "But she wasn't buried," he said.

The milk boiled over, but Tasker didn't seem to notice. "No," said Morris. "She was cremated. It was her wish, gentlemen."

"Then . . . what . . . happened . . . to . . . the . . . coffin?" asked Tasker with difficulty.

"They sold it back to me. And I wasn't sorry to take it. A beautiful job it was."

Bracegirdle sat down heavily. "As the craftsman responsible for her last resting-place, did you perform the usual offices for the deceased?"

"I did, indeed. Even beyond what I was paid to do, gentlemen. I saw no reason to reveal to her sisters those relics she had guarded so carefully. 'I want them burying with me,' she said. Well, I carefully placed them beside her in the shell I made for the cremation—quite a nice job, too, in its way, gentlemen, though not of course——"

"Did you notice the nature of those . . . relics?" asked Bracegirdle.

"I did not! They were contained in large envelopes I did not think it my duty to open. Consideration and reverence is my motto."

"I can well believe it," Bracegirdle said.

Tasker's face had turned slightly greyer, if that were possible. "It may surprise you," he said to Morris, "but those envelopes. . . ."

Bracegirdle put a hand on his arm. "You're a gambler," he said. "Let it go. It's a long time since. You're not broke. Neither are Sharrard's! I've always said you can't take it with you, but I'll never say it again." THE END

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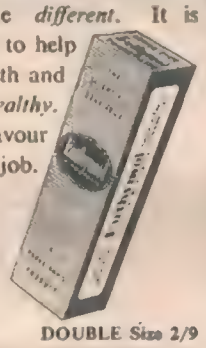

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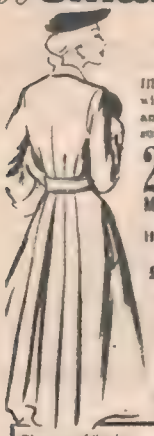

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TIGER IN THE SMOKE

Continued from page 18

work, growing public hysteria, confused sympathy and censure from an excited Press, anxiety in high places, and nothing, not one pointer, not one useful clue.

The principals—Havoc, Tiddy Doll, the brothers and Bill—had vanished again as completely as if the sewers had swallowed them.

This morning Stanislaus Oates and the Metropolitan Commissioner were with the Home Secretary. Chief Superintendent Yeo was at the Great Western Hospital, hoping to get an interview with Canon Avril.

The old man had been out of danger since midnight and it was hoped he would be able to say a word or two as soon as he awoke.

Dear, *silly* old fool. Luke thought he could just understand him and hoped to be able one day to forgive him. Sam Drummock, the canon's journalist lodger, had saved his old friend's life. He had come creeping down in the early morning, intending to take an article to Fleet Street, and had found Sergeant Picot asleep, the front door unlatched, and Avril's bed unslept in.

It had taken the frightened household twenty minutes to find the old man where he lay on the vestry floor, which was as far as he had got before the loss of blood had doubled his legs under him.

Luke was open to bet that Yeo would get nothing from Avril voluntarily, and besides, what news could he tell? Havoc had been his attacker—his prints were all over the blessed church.

As to the rest, Luke could hardly suppose that anyone as dangerous and as desperate as Havoc would have had a chat with the old man before he did his handiwork, much less mention where he was going.

As Luke sat staring red-eyed at the notes before him, he checked every point. Mrs. Cash was in a detention cell downstairs, held on an accessory charge. She had refused to speak all yesterday and he was giving her until zero-hour, just before the midday meal, before he tried her again. Something, certainly, was giving the wicked old girl in the cell a remarkable amount of courage.

He sighed, and allowed his mind to wander briefly to the four treasure hunters.

He expected to hear from them at any minute now. There had been some delay in the crossing. That was all he had gathered so far. It was curious, in a way, because he had wired, and yet Meg Elginbrodde had not telephoned about her father.

He returned to his list. "Mrs. Cash's cottage." There they had all but taken the paper off the walls. Havoc's prison clothes, or what was left of them when they had been shovelled out of the back of the boiler, had gone down to the Forensic Science Laboratories at Hendon. They would provide sufficient evidence to take care of the old lady for a while, or he was a Dutchman. Then there were the cash memorandum books. They were the only hope. Thirty-four in all, little fat black books hidden under a loose board in the bedroom. Three hundred and twelve names and addresses of men and women who still had outstanding reasons for hesitating to refuse to do Mrs. Cash a favour.

Just after seven o'clock, five picked officers, which was more than could be spared, had set out from Crumb Street to visit and question each one. They were still at work.

Meanwhile, there was plenty to do. His desk was stacked high with dockets. The maze of tinted paper towered in front of Luke's hot eyes, looking like the Blue Ridge mountains. He surveyed it thoughtfully and reached for another barley sugar lump. Andy Galloway, his clerk, an earnest youth who had served in the R.A.F., had been feeding him with this for days in the belief that it would keep him from dropping in his tracks. Luke reckoned he must have eaten four pounds of the stuff, and wondered idly whose ration he was robbing.

As he put out his hand, the pile of paper on the right side of the desk toppled over and slid slowly to the floor. He dived after it, but one flying sheet eluded him and he had to lean under a chair for it. As he fished it out to place it with the rest, he glanced at it, and one paragraph caught his attention. It was a reply to a query of his own which he had put to Sergeant Branch while that officer had been reporting on Havoc's companions.

Why, Luke had asked, did two fishermen spend the war in the Army when all such men had been directly instructed to join one of the two sea Services? It was a minor point and he had forgotten making it, but good old Branch had been busy. After enormous difficulty, he had identified the two as Roland and Thomas Gripper of Weft, near Aldeburgh, Suffolk, and the paragraph in his report which caught Luke's eye read:

"On leaving school, the two brothers joined their father, Albert Edward Gripper, who owned a fishing smack, and worked for him until 1937 (December), when he was charged and convicted of various offences connected with the shipping of uncustomed goods. He received a sentence of twelve months' imprisonment and was severely fined. The boat appears to have been sold to meet these demands, and the brothers then left the district. Evidence points to the fact that they were simple, ignorant men, and it looks possible that after their brush with the law they felt it safest to disclaim any knowledge of their former calling, hence their appearance in the Army soon after the outbreak of war. The father died in 1940, but a mother and sister still live at Weft."

As the chief inspector finished reading, the private telephone on his desk tinkled and Chief Superintendent Yeo's deep voice came through to him.

"Charlie? Good. Listen. Canon Avril spoke to Havoc and told him-(*a*) that the name of the place where the stuff was hidden was Ste. Odile, near St. Malo, and (*b*) that Geoffrey Levett had gone after it. That's all. Nothing else, so far. The old gentleman is very weak, but they say he'll live. I shall be here for the next half hour, but I wanted you to have that information at once. Anything new with you. No? Very well, keep at it. Goodbye."

Luke's hand was still on the receiver and the expression of incredulity was still on his face when Sergeant Picot appeared, looking as excited as anyone had ever seen him.

"Chief," he burst out as he slammed the docket on the desk, "here's a small van found abandoned at Tollesbury in Essex. First reported 10 p.m. yesterday and just been traced to a family called Brown who run a little bakery in the Barrow Road here. They're all at home and they're lost without the van for the business, and yet they haven't reported it. Old Mrs. Brown, who owns the shop, is on Mrs. Cash's books. She owes her three hundred pounds."

Luke sat looking at him. "Tollesbury? Where's the nearest town to that?"

Picot's solid face flushed with chagrin. "You must know Tollesbury, Chief. A wonderful place. Yachts, oysters, fishing-boats——"

Luke's sagging body jerked to attention. "Is it on the sea?"

"The estuary. Right out on the marsh, yet only forty-odd miles from London. It's littered with little sea-going boats, all of them out in the river well away from the village, and the dinghies lie around on the mud with no one to mind them. If anybody should want to pinch a sea-going craft it would be the one place on earth to get away with it. Chief, *suppose those lads tried to stage the raid again.*"

The inspector looked at him. "Anyone down there lost a sea-going boat?"

"Nothing's come through yet, sir."

Luke stretched out a long arm. As in most other professions, the one certain way of cutting through red tape in police matters was to have a private word on the telephone with a very old friend in another department. Within

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

I WAS ten years old when I did this, my first dance in public. It was an oriental dance in the pantomime *Dick Whittington* at Kennington and my backwards fall on to the ground at the end of it regularly stopped the show.

A few years before I had started dancing to correct my flat feet and weak legs, and this was my first professional engagement. My understudy was Jessie Matthews. "The Child Pavlova," the bills called me, but I was too young to realize what an embarrassing description that was.

I was a painfully good child, so well-behaved that other children called me "Goody-Goody." It was just that I always thought it was stupid to waste time playing when there were so many interesting books to read and music to hear.

When the great impresario, Diaghileff, saw me taking a ballet lesson, he immediately undertook to pay for my training until I became adult and ready to join his company. But when I was thirteen my father, a mining engineer, died, and my mother was left with four daughters, and in financial straits.

So I had to go to work. Diaghileff would not let me stop dancing, and arranged for me to join his company at once. So I became the first child dancer in the history of serious ballet. When I joined the Russian Ballet I was a tiny, solemn child in socks—I was too small for stockings. Everywhere I went a governess accompanied me, and the L.C.C. waived their rules about school attendance, because I could always pass their exams with flying colours.

Rushing round the Continent in a ballet company, dancing famous rôles—one ballet, *The Nightingale*, was specially created for me—was a wonderful way to spend my youthful years. But you could hardly call it a childhood.

She has grown up to be a famous ballerina. For her name, turn to page 34

"I Haven't Made The Beds Yet!"

When Doris called for me to go shopping, I was nowhere near ready. I'd woken up with a nasty headache, and was feeling so rotten I'd hardly started my housework.

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a few minutes, although it was such an awkward hour of the morning, the well-remembered voice of Superintendent Burnby of the Essex Constabulary was drawling over the wire.

"Wotcher, Charlie boy, how are you? See you've kind of mislaid someone up there in the fog. It's funny where they get to, ain't it? Never mind, it's a nice drying day today. What? Boat from Tollesbury? That's a very strange thing, so there is now. Got it on my desk this minute. Just come in. What are you trying to do, confess?"

LUKE spent a few precious moments in lucid explanation, and the other voice lost its banter at once.

"It could be," he said briskly, "it could be. You may be on to something. This is a smack of eighteen tons, the *Marlene Doreen*; her owner, Mr. Elias Pye. He saw her last lying out in the fleet just before 11 p.m. the day before yesterday. His son missed her yesterday afternoon about three. Until dawn this morning they thought she must have fouled her anchor. They spent a bit of time thinking about that, and notified the Tollesbury Police an hour ago. Customs have been informed. Anything else you want? We can't always do it like this, so make the most of it."

Luke mentioned the van, and some of his own rising excitement was echoed in the countryman's answering drawl. "Charlie, I've seen that van. I've been down there this morning on some other business. That's why I'm here so late. Lucky you rang me. It was a baker's van and quite empty except for one thing our chap happened to find on the floor. He showed it to me, but we didn't think there was much to it. It was a lens out of a pair of dark glasses. It meant nothing then, but now you start me thinking. Wasn't one of the five wearing dark glasses?"

Charlie Luke's spirits rose so violently that they took his breath away.

Burnby was still speaking. "I'll have the van tested for prints and rush 'em to you, to be on the safe side. Meanwhile, I'll get the water people out. The *Marlene Doreen* will be sitting on a mudbank by this time as sure as Christmas, unless your blokes are fisherfolk born."

"Two of them are. Suffolk folk from Weft."

A thin whistle came over the wire. "That's torn it. She only carries a crew of two. Where will they make for? Do you know?"

"Ste. Odile, near St. Malo."

"Ha! I know. They'll be there by now, then."

"*What?*"

The violence of the exclamation set up a resistance in the countryman. "Well, it's just after one, isn't it? And they must have taken her out on the tide yesterday morning. If their luck held and they didn't go aground they should be there just about now, or they soon will be, you can depend on that."

He paused, and as the silence lengthened, laughed apologetically. "Well, I see you've got plenty on your plate, boy, so I won't detain you. All the best. Let me know if there's anything you want. Goodbye."

Luke hung up. It was not often that he found events outstripping his mental speed, but now he found himself staggering rather than rising to the occasion.

"The French police," he said to the startled Picot. "Radio the French police. Here are the details. While I write them out, get me Chief Superintendent Yeo at the Great Western Hospital and ring that bell for Andy."

He cocked an eye at the window, which showed a square of limpid sky, and his dark face began to glow again as the fires of his energy reddened once more.

"If it's a good drying day, Len, you old so-and-so," he murmured, "it's good enough for flying, isn't it?"

* * *

The November afternoon was as mild as early autumn, and in the sunlit stillness the neat countryside lay like a scarf of purple and green and soft gold under a sky of pearl.

Geoffrey Levett had been dozing at the wheel near the head of the growing line of traffic, which waited for the tide to fall so that it might pass.

"I feel," he observed over his shoulder to Campion and Amanda in the back, "as if I had been playing a game of snakes and ladders."

Amanda laughed and nodded towards the dark, wedge-shaped hill before them just across the falling water. "We can see it, anyway," she said. "I never thought we should. I've travelled unhopefully. Wake up, Albert."

"Why?" inquired Mr. Campion, not unreasonably. "Every vehicle—is a channel steamer a vehicle?—in which I have set foot in the past two days and nights has stopped dead for an hour or two when just within sight of its goal, and I've developed an ability to drop off, as they say, in self-defence. The thing that amazes me is why you, Meg, as well as the travel authorities, thought to tell us everything about this doubtlessly delightful village except that it was an island. Purely as a matter of academic interest, what induced you to forget it?"

MEG did not turn her head, which was all but lost in the collar of her travelling coat. "When I was here it wasn't an island," she said. "This only happens at high tide."

"Which is twice a day," murmured Geoffrey, his hand tightening over hers where it rested beside them. "Hallo, we can move." The car in front began to move cautiously forward. "He thinks he can make it now, does he? Well, here goes."

He let his engine race and then the heavy car moved smoothly into the tide.

As they came up on the other side, the road forked and they edged up the narrow way, leaving the rest of the traffic to take the main track to the village.

The hill rose steeply between high hedges, golden in the sun, and the air was clear and peaceful save for the buzzing of a little silver scout plane which sailed low across the sky, swooped and turned back again.

"What's *he* doing?" murmured Campion, but no one was listening, and the journey was so pleasant that he closed his eyes again.

They turned out of the road into a

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"I can't thank you enough for this smashing flashlight"

lane which ran up across a broad bank of meadow, bare and desolate. The house appeared suddenly, and with it the dark green sea and the ragged, broken line of coast, lace-edged with surf, stretching out to the horizon on either side.

It was a little stone house, squat and solid as a castle, with a single turret and a wall round it which would have withstood a siege.

As they passed under the arch leading to the forecourt, they saw it was deserted and in bad repair. There was no glass in the windows, and grass had grown through the crack which split the stone before the nail-studded door.

They climbed out in silence. The lighthearted mood of a moment before wavered before this sudden picture of desolation.

"I hate this bit of it," said Meg, who looked young and forlorn despite the sophisticated swagger of her mink-lined cheviot. "Come through here."

She walked across the small courtyard to a door in the wall, and put her weight against it. The door creaked open, dragging a fringe of sere grass and weeds with it, and they followed her through into the wreckage of what once had been a formal garden, sloping to the edge of the cliff and bounded there by a wall in which there were now many breaches.

Despite its position, the enclosure seemed strangely airless, and the rents in the masonry through which the sea gleamed so dangerously far below were welcome.

Meg had paused before a small stone building which crouched in the angle of the main wall. It was constructed in a pit, so that little more than half its walls and its conical roof was visible among the rank grass that almost completely surrounded it.

"Oh, look," cried Amanda, "the ice-house. Is that it really?" As Amanda spoke, Meg stepped inside and the others followed her.

The inside was a surprise, for it was light. The whole of one corner had fallen away with part of the outer wall, so that now there was a ragged window at breast level looking out over the cliff to the sea. The effect was unexpectedly enchanting. Sky and sea merged on the horizon, and the afternoon sun, streaming out over the green water, slashed it boldly with gold, while violet shadows and plumes of surf made marblings between.

A little boat lying at anchor, her red sails furled, bobbed in the foreground, a focal point in the seascape. At that distance she was no larger than a matchbox, and the name, a two-letter word painted boldly in white on her dark side, was unreadable.

"How very lovely!" Just for an instant the brilliant vision, so unexpected and so beautiful, took all their minds, and Meg spoke with delight. "There's smoke, too. A little bit of smoke on the horizon. Can you see it? Otherwise she's absolutely alone."

Geoffrey laughed. "First sign of life since we turned east," he said. "Nice to see it. I thought we'd come to the end of the world."

Meg touched his sleeve. "Now, then, Geoff, no more secrecy. We're all alone. What have we got to do? Get the floor up?"

"No." Levett had moved the stone to the edge of the gully where water once had run, and was looking at the uncompromisingly Victorian cement garden figure, barrel-skirted and ridiculous, which kept a mildewed guard there.

"It's in here, whatever it is," Geoffrey said. "The postscript simply said: 'The Treasure is hidden in the statue.' I think our best way is to put it down, Campion, so that we can see the base. Shall we try?"

CAMPION and Geoffrey, solid-looking in their greatcoats, took the figure by waist and shoulders and tipped it slowly back on to the moss-grown flagstones. It lay there, mis-shapen and ridiculous, the barrel skirt joining the base to make a ragged O, like an oyster shell.

The original cast had been hollow, for the cement outline of the inner wall was clearly marked, but the inside had been plastered over inexpertly and there was a fold of some sort of material, blanket possibly, just visible in the white mass. Campion tried it with his nail and marked it slightly.

"It's soft, but not quite soft enough," he said. "I think we need expert help with this, you know, as the thing is so fragile. It's not three yet. Suppose we go down to the village and get the local mason? We can't possibly get at it without tools."

"Isn't there something in the car?" It was Meg, her cheeks bright and her eyes dancing as Elginbrodde must have seen her when scarcely out of her teens.

"No." Geoffrey linked his arm through hers possessively, and his virility and happiness were aggressive in the little space. "No, Albert's right. It's delicate, you see. My letter stressed that. You be patient, sweetheart. No good coming all this way and smashing the thing. We'll go down to the village. You and Amanda can get us rooms at the pub while we hunt out the workmen. I think it might be easier to move the whole thing. . . . What's up, Amanda?"

"Nothing." The older girl drew her red head into the building again. "I

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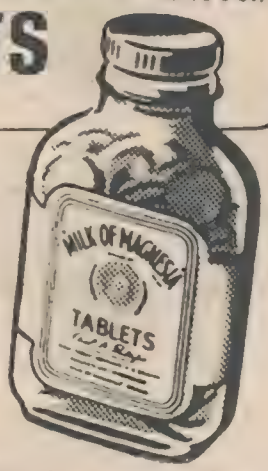

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thought I heard something, but it was only the door swinging back. Go down to the village, shall we?"

"You three go back. Amanda can see to the hotel, Geoff can get hold of the authorities, and Albert can hunt up a mason. Let me stay." Meg spoke earnestly and disengaged her arm.

"I shouldn't," said Amanda promptly. "You'll only get cold—if you don't fall over the cliff."

"But I'd rather like to stay with my treasure. Do you mind, Geoff? It matters to me, rather."

Mr. Campion did not interfere. In these matters he was a very old bird. His pale eyes rested on Geoffrey's face, where a fleeting flame of jealousy had flared and died of shame.

"Do anything you like, my dear," Levett said awkwardly at last. "Stay if you want to. It'll make us hurry back."

"That's what I thought." Meg was as delighted as a child. "I'll just sit here and look at it and wonder what the Ste. Odile mystery can be. Hurry, or I shall die of curiosity."

The Sacred Mystery of Ste. Odile. A private compartment in Mr. Campion's mind went smoothly into action. He was a boy of ten again, standing behind his redoubtable mama in the Eglise de la Collegiate at Villeneuve over the bridge from Avignon, struggling to translate the rolling phrases booming from the official guide.

"This work of art miraculous without something-or-other alone in the world except for a sister (that must be wrong) in the custody adoring of the family private of one of the most big gentlemen in France. They call it the Mystery, the Mystery Sacred of Ste. Odile-sur-Mer."

"My hat!" he said in sudden excitement. "This is going to be interesting. We'll get a truck and cart the whole thing down to the hotel. We'll be back in half an hour, Meg."

He swept Amanda out, and Geoffrey, hesitating, turned and kissed the girl. He was not often demonstrative, and she was taken by surprise.

"Darling, how very nice."

"Are you going to be all right?"

"Don't be silly. Hurry back and we'll see what it is."

"Right. Twenty minutes. Don't go too near that hole in the wall."

"I won't."

MEG sat down on the deserted plinth and put her fur-lined sleeve on the base of the statue. It was exquisitely quiet. She heard the car start quite distinctly and listened to the sound of the engine dying gently away until it was lost in the deeper and more caressing growl that was the sea. The sun was still shining and the tinsel streaks on the water so far below had become a deeper gold. The little boat was still there, but a sail had altered slightly.

There was another boat, too, far away as yet and beetle-sized. It was dark, with a long white tail of foam which showed its speed.

The roar of a plane passing very low over the garden spoiled the peace and she resented it mildly.

She ran an exploring finger round the plaster filling of the cast. She was very anxious to see her new responsibility, and as she rubbed the plaster idly a shallow disc of it flaked away, exposing a deep rift in the packing.

She was so interested in its possibilities that she did not hear the soft rustle of the box bushes outside in the garden, and by the time she had opened her bag and unearthed a long nail file, nothing could have disturbed her.

She probed the weak spot cautiously with the file, and unexpectedly a whole chunk of the dry, powdery composition came away, disclosing a dusty bulge covered with something which must at one time have been a blanket. Feeling very guilty, but incapable of resisting the temptation, she worked on, and very soon had a cavity nearly a foot deep and wide enough to take her hand.

She was so excited that the step on the stone behind her was purely welcome, and she turned her head briefly to catch a glimpse of a blue jersey and beret dark against the bright doorway.

"*Bonjour,*" she said politely, and, returning to the work, went on without looking at him. "*Qu'il fait beau. Est-ce-que——?*"

"Speak English."

"English?" she said. "What luck! I wish you'd appeared before."

Another piece of plaster had broken away and she was absorbed in edging it gently out. His voice had sounded husky, but it had made no deep impression on her.

"Do you work here? Or, no, I suppose you're fishing. Is that your boat?"

Another lump of plaster came away as she spoke. She set it down carefully beside her and put in her hand for more. "Doesn't it all look wonderful from here?"

HAVOC put one hand on the doorpost. He had slept for an hour on the boat, but no more, and now he could feel the earth heaving under his feet like the sides of some vast animal, alive and uncertain. He was nearly done, nearly exhausted. The final effort up the cliff had drained the barrel of his resources, but he had made it.

There was only Doll to be considered. Havoc had seen him drop into the water while he himself was still lying panting on the cliff after the climb. Roly, Tom and Bill had stayed aboard the *Marlene Doreen*. They were on her now, still sitting there expecting him to return, the blamed fools. They would still be sitting there when the police launch came up.

But Doll had seen the red light and come after him. The old brute was shrewd and he was game, and the Treasure had got him. But he'd never make the cliff. He must be somewhere on the face now, just under that second overhang, perhaps, clinging there, looking like a white slug with a black head. Tiddy Doll with one eye working and patent dancing-pumps. . . .

As an obstacle, the girl was so negligible he had forgotten her existence. But her voice, when he heard it, recalled the voice of Meg as a child, clear and kiddish, and with an irritatingly better accent than his own.

"I'm trying to get something very fragile out of here without breaking it," she was saying. "It's something which has been left to me, and I don't know quite what it is. I've got to get all this packing out, you see. It's still held quite fast, or it may be just very heavy. You wouldn't care to have a go at it, would you? Be very careful."

He lurched forward, stumbling as he let go the post. He was much weaker than he had thought. He saw her horrified look as the light from the breach in the wall fell upon him, and his first thought was that she had recognized him from their childhood. But her exclamation dispelled that flattering illusion.

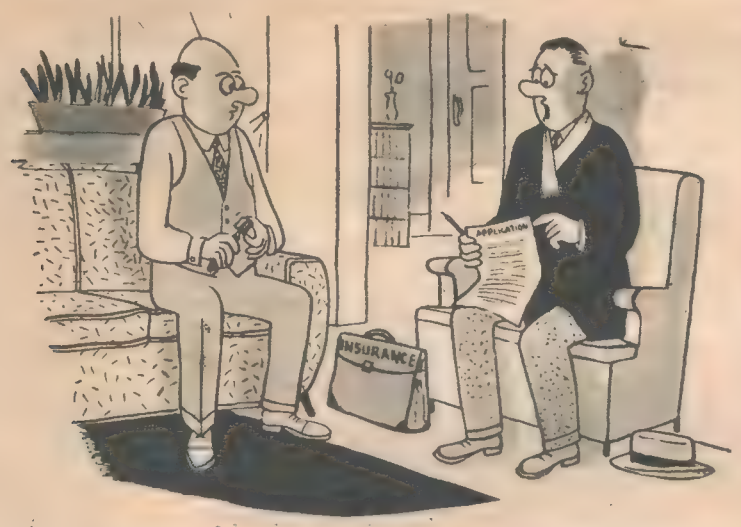
"Good heavens! Are you all right?" Her concern reminded him infuriatingly of Avril. "You look most terribly ill. Please don't bother about this. The others will be back in a minute, anyhow. This doesn't matter in the least. I'm awfully sorry. I didn't realize. Can I do anything for you?"

"Get out of the way." There was no power in him. He noticed it, and thrust the thought aside just as he thrust aside the hand she put out to steady him.

As for Meg, he looked so ghastly, his skin so pallid under the three-day beard, his bones sticking up through the shoulders of his jersey, and his eyes so dull within their caked rims, that she saw no tiger there. She rose from the plinth and he dropped on to it and thrust his hand into the cavity she had made.

He worked feverishly, his powerful fingers breaking away the plaster and clawing it out into the gully. The stimulus of touching the long-sought hiding-place fanned the ashes of his energy, and she watched him, fascinated, misled by the show of strength.

The hard core of the discovery, a bundle wrapped in several thicknesses of cement-soaked blanket, began gradually to take shape. It appeared to be roughly cylindrical, about five feet long and the base not quite two



"You've filled in the application correctly but for one thing, Mr. Perkins. Where it asks the relationship of Mrs. Perkins to yourself, you should have written down 'wife'—not 'strained' "

feet in diameter. Twice, before he had cleared the inner end of it, he made attempts to drag it out bodily, but it resisted him, and he went back feverishly to his scraping and shovelling. The white dust covered him, turning his hair and the blue jersey he had found in the *Marlene Doreen's* locker to matted grey.

Meg eyed him dubiously. She was not afraid of him, but for him, and she was relieved to hear the vague buzz of activity which was becoming slowly more and more noticeable both from inland and the sea. She was inexperienced in illness, but he looked very bad, she thought.

A plume of spray streaking across her living seascape caught the corner of her eye and she turned just too late to see the craft whose wake it had been. The little boat with the red sails was no longer visible, either.

"Your boat has moved," she said. "Did you know? Perhaps I can see it if I come round here."

"It's not mine. Pull the side of this thing."

The command had come back into his voice and it surprised her into immediate obedience. She stepped down into the gully and took hold where he indicated.

As she moved, there sounded very faint and far away from the sea below a splatter of sharp little noises, followed by a long, bodyless cry like a seabird's. It was only just audible and barely a tone higher than the ceaseless, soporific soughing of the waves. Havoc heard, but his busy hands did not falter. Rifles. He thought so. Doll's pallid torso must have made a wonderful target.

The whole incident had passed clean over the girl's head, he noticed. The Science was not faltering, the Luck was holding. He could feel it sweeping him on.

At last the bundle moved. "Pull," he commanded, "now." And again, "Pull."

She had as much strength as he had, he realized, and it bothered him fleetingly. It was queer to find it in a girl. The flaking mass slid forward on the slippery powder.

"Pull," he repeated, unaware that he whispered. "Pull."

"No. Look, it's caught. There. See?" She touched the side of the original opening. "This stuff on the base is harder than the rest. It's this jagged bit, here; that's what's stopping us. Wait a minute."

She tried to dislodge it with her ridiculous file. "What we need," she said, splitting the words as she made her futile efforts, "what we really need is a good—strong—knife."

She was not looking at him, and anyway, even under his mask of plaster, his face did not change. He felt under his jersey. His fingers found the familiar sheath, and he sighed as the knife handle slid comfortably into his palm.

Meg laughed aloud as she saw the blade on the cement. "I *said* you were lucky." Her voice sounded joyful, like a child's.

"I *am* lucky," he said, and struck.

The fang of plaster and the bright steel blade split together and together fell to join the other débris.

"Oh!" She was concerned at his loss. "I'm so sorry."

He did not hear her. He was listening to the rhythm of petrol engines, still too far away to be anything but an undercurrent to the breeze blowing up from the valley. He flicked the useless shaft over his shoulder and caught the bundle with both hands.

"Take care. Oh, please, take care! It's very, very delicate." She bent forward to help him, and he permitted it, because he knew the thing must surely be too heavy for him to lift alone. Together they set it down softly on the moss-padded stones.

The roar of an aeroplane engine, heavier than the one belonging to the little silver scout of earlier in the afternoon, swooped down through all the other noises which were converging on the ice-house. Its proud clamour as it began to circle over the smooth pasture on the cliff top drowned the revving engines in the valley and the shouting from the sea.

Neither of the two in the garden heard it at all. The stiffened blankets round the bundle had rotted and they fell away easily from the main structure, which lay solid and uncompromising before them.

It was a wooden chest, hollowed from a section of a single elm bole, white and seared with age and worm, but hooped, like a barrel, with iron. For a moment its impregnability was too much for the man and his hands flickered over the gnarled surface with awful helplessness.

"It opens here. Look, there's a hinge and a catch." Her voice reached him without any personality, as if it were the voice of the Science itself, and in the same unreal way he saw her stoop across the box and heard the gentle whine of the dry hinges.

The rounded lid fell back, disclosing a lining of fine embroidery and stump work on silk so old and fragile that a breath must rend and destroy it. Inside there was a mound, covered prosaically with modern cotton-wool, pounds of it rising up absurdly like whipped cream on a cake.

Suddenly he was so frightened that his outstretched hand paused in mid-air and Meg was before him. Very cautiously she drew back the covering, and the Ste. Odile Treasure lay regarding them with the same sweet innocent solemnity with which it had regarded

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all the cruelties, the bawdinesses and the unconquerable hope of 600 years.

It was a Virgin and Child in ivory, fourteenth-century work, and carved out of a single curving tusk so that the main figure bent slightly as if the better to support its gentle load.

It was not quite the twin of its more famous sister at Villeneuve-les-Avignon. That exquisite work of art has been damaged, and there is a strange sense of pain as well as a trace of oriental over-subtlety in some of its detail. But this, the unknown master's other surviving work, was perfect and without blemish. Its serenity flowed up naturally from the breath-taking drapery at knee and hem to the medieval face, not yet a saint's nor yet a child's.

For a full minute the two stared at it in a silence which nothing could penetrate. Meg sank down on her heels in the dust and her eyes grew slowly wider and wider until the tears formed in them. It was the time-honoured reaction, the Sacred Mystery which had given the treasure its name. Honest women wept when they saw it first. It was a phenomenon which had been noticed during eighteen generations.

As the teardrop fell on her hand, she started, coloured and turned apologetically to the man who had helped her.

"I didn't expect it," she said huskily. "I didn't expect anything like it. It must be the most beautiful thing in the world."

He did not move, and she was spared the sight of his face.

It was typical of him that in that moment of disaster Havoc remained realistic. The Science of Luck was an impersonal force, vast as the slipstream of the planets, relentless as a river winding down a hill. The only human, and therefore blameable, element in this whole catastrophic mistake was himself.

As he crouched by the open box, his body seemed to contract and grow smaller, as a corpse does when the life leaves it.

There was no other mystery about the Treasure save the little miracle which it had already performed when Meg had wept. The figure filled each crevice of the ancient case, which had been hewn to fit it. There was no space left for a secret cache of jewels or other lesser trove. All there was lay before him, open to his hand.

Overhead, the pilot of the police plane shut off his engine and prepared to land. Where the road forked eastward, a car full of men in uniform hooted violently at the Talbot which had passed it on the corner.

Havoc scrambled to his feet and swayed over the girl.

"I'll smash it," he said aloud.

He saw her swift upward glance in which there was no fear, only a deepening of the concern which had so infuriated him earlier. Then, very smoothly, she [illegible] the [illegible] the chest and quite calmly sat down upon it.

"You're ill," she said, and the authority in her voice was frightening because she sounded so strong.

He shook his head and motioned to her to move. He did not want to have to touch her, because he needed all the strength he possessed, and time was short. All the same, he would smash the doll. There might be something in it, and it would be a satisfaction, anyhow. The girl was still sitting there like a fool, and he let her have it.

"Get up!"

She seemed to be much farther from him than he had thought, for the blow missed her entirely and all but overbalanced him. Her sudden laughter was the most terrible sound he had ever heard, for he knew what she was going to say a fraction of a second before he heard the words.

"You look like the little boy next door, Johnny Cash, who took my toy theatre and tore it up to get the glitter out of it, and got nothing, poor darling but old bits of paper and an awful row. Do lie down. Then you'll feel better."

He turned from her blindly and staggered out into the airless garden.

Now the whole hillside was alive with noise, and from down on the rocks hoarse exclamations floated up, as men, whose very tongue sounds excited to Anglo-Saxon ears, fished for a pallid body in the shallow water.

The man who fled lurched against the door into the courtyard. It did not give because it opened the other way, and that was lucky for him. He heard a footstep on the stones within and had just time to drop down behind a dark bush beside the post before the door swung inwards, and Luke, followed by his opposite number from the Sûreté, came charging through on his way to the ice-house.

At the same moment, the Talbot and a police car raced each other into the yard.

Havoc edged a step backwards, missed his footing, and rolled over into a ditch which had been completely hidden by the long grasses.

His luck was persisting. It had never failed him since he had found its key. Where he directed, so it led him safely.

It was soft and cool in the ditch and he could have slept where he lay, but he resisted the temptation and crawled on a foot or so to find that an old conduit pipe, quite large enough to take his emaciated body, passed under the wall and out on to the open hilltop.

As he emerged, lifting his head wearily amid the weeds, he discovered that the cover continued. He was in a disused waterway, a deep, narrow fold in the open plain, with the house to his left. He could stand in it, even, without his head showing above the dry grass on its edges.

Behind him, the noise and commotion, the shouting and the signals from cliff to beach, were all receding, and as he stumbled painfully on they grew fainter.

He could not tell where he was going, and the curve in the hollow was so gradual that he was never aware of it.

He moved blindly and emptily, asking no questions, going nowhere, save away.

The ditch wound round towards the cliff edge where the coast was deeply indented, as if the sea had one day taken a single bite out of the rocky wall. The tiny bay thus made was now almost three parts of a circle, and, long before, falling water draining off the land had worn deep sides to a pool 200 feet below.

Havoc paused. The great beam which had been let into the bank on either side to save any unfortunate animal swept away by the rains, supported him at breast height, and he hung there for some minutes looking down.

Beyond the bay the sea was restless, scarred by long shadows and pitted with bright flecks where the last of the winter sun had caught it. But the pool was quiet and very still.

It looked dark. A man could creep in there and sleep soft and long.

It seemed to him that he had no decision to make, and, now that he knew himself to be fallible, no one to question. Presently he let his feet slide gently forward.

The body was never found.

THE END

"Tiger In The Smoke," by Margery Allingham, will be published in book form in the summer by Chatto & Windus, price 12s. 6d.

OH, JOHNNY!

by TIM

THE NAKED ISLAND

Continued from page 12

the opportunity to do something for the men who lay day after day in the hospital in our courtyard. We all gave twenty-five cents from our three dollars, and Noel Duckworth, the rosy-cheeked little padre who helped us all in so many ways, took this into town with him and with it bought soap and food and odd trifles. No money was ever better invested. It was sheer delight to see the faces of those near-corpses as the little padre dished out his purchases to each one.

A party of Australians went to work one day on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. We worked in one of those chaotic dumps in which the Japanese seemed to specialize. It contained lengths of railway line, mortar bombs, coils of barbed wire and signal wire, a few Mills bombs and a wireless set.

All day as we worked, we endured the bellows of *"Curruh"* and *"Bugero"* from a repulsive little Nip. At the end of the day this worthy was laying about him with his naked bayonet, and had laid open the flesh on two foreheads already. It seemed only fair then that, while one of the lads set a Mills bomb booby trap among the petrol drums, the rest of us should steal the wireless set.

The set was bundled into a rice-bag and slung swiftly and unceremoniously from one man to another as we were searched. At the fail we had another search and felt a certain apprehension. It is remarkable how prominent a field radio in a sack can seem on a search parade.

In the midst of this search, however, the Almighty weighed in heavily on our side with a sudden violent tropical storm. Shouting: *"Damma, damma—tarun ame"* (this is no good to me—too much rain), our searchers lost all interest in their quest for contraband and scuttled back to the guardroom. We strolled casually past them to our cells—one of us bearing a sackful of potential B.B.C. news bulletins slung negligently over his shoulder.

Baiting The Jap

During one of our midday breaks when out on a working party, a Jap n.c.o. approached us to air his knowledge of English and gloat. "War he announced, "finish-u soon."

"Go on, eh, Nippon?" we encouraged him. "How's that?"

"Birrma, you know?" asked the Nip. We said, yes, we knew Burma.

"Indiah, you know?" asked the Nip. We said, yes, we knew India.

"Australiah, you know?" asked the Nip. We said, yes, we knew Australia (and a Scot added testily, "Och, mon, cut oot the geography and tell us your news").

"New Zealand, you know?" asked the Nip. Wearily we said yes.

"All," said the Nip, with an embracing gesture towards his own bosom, "All Nippon."

We laughed heartily, and the round yellow face with the shaved eyebrows and the glittering brown eyes went as close to a flush of rage as the Japanese can manage. Exercising all his limited self-control, the Nip produced the daily newspaper printed in Kuala Lumpur—printed in English because no one could read Japanese—and pointed to the headlines. We Australians took one look and burst out laughing.

"Nippon's Warrior Gods of the Air Destroy Outer Suburbs of Broome," the paper announced grandiosely. We laughed and laughed and determined to back us up, though not really understanding the British laughed too.

In between outbursts we explained to the Pommies that Broome—whose outer suburbs the Nips claimed to have destroyed—contained one makeshift airstrip and four tin sheds. The laughter became louder as this information spread and the Nip flushed deeper crimson. His hand, as always when in doubt, flew to his bayonet.

"Nippon number one," he screamed. A small chorus of British voices assured him that Nippon on the contrary was number ten.

Tojo number one, he bellowed, his eyes bloodshot—and sighted the Argyll nearest him, who, looking as indifferent as if he had been stung by a mosquito, replied: "Churchill number one—Tojo number two hundred."

"Churchill number one — Tojo number two hundred," we declared with authority. It was on! Our party was at once fallen in, and the entire guard, armed with lumps of timber, then marched up and down singing incriminatingly at us.

After twenty minutes, the mass bashing still continued and the Nips—far from getting over it by their outburst—seemed only to be whipping themselves up into a state of murder. Half a dozen of them ran, flailing indiscriminately, their faces contorted, up and down our lines. It was ceasing to be amusing. This was another of those occasions when the light-hearted bashing had passed into the realms of possible massacre.

Our survival now depended upon our taking everything standing upright and in silence (to fall to the ground or to complain was a stimulant which, under these conditions, always sent the Japs completely out of control!).

A Scot Hits Back

Typically, the Nips picked on the biggest man on the parade—an Australian. Standing before him, the smallest guard hit him with everything he had. Lumps of wood, his bayonet, his rifle, his fist. The Australian took it all expressionlessly. Both ranks of men stiffened with revulsion and a muttering broke out. Another few seconds and consequences regardless, discretion would be abandoned and the Nips disposed of once and for all. It was an Argyll who saved us.

Leaping out of the front rank, the little Scot, no taller than the Nip, young and furious, sprang on the guard and rocked him to the foundations of his web-toed canvas boots with a clucking left to the chin.

The silence that ensued was startling. The Nip stood dazed, with blood trickling from the right-hand corner of the mouth. All the other guards stood with

HE LAYS BRICKS—and BUILDS "BULLETS"

TAKE a look at this picture. It is of a man who lays bricks all day—and turns to his one hobby of *Bullets* when work is done. "I've let the writing of *Bullets* become as much a part of the week as working, sleeping and eating," he told JOHN BULL.

What good has his hobby done to this man, fifty-two year old J. Plummer, Hill Farm, Braintree? Well, in addition to the regular weekly entertainment enjoyed, he has *thirteen* times had the pleasure of seeing his name in print as a prize-winner—the latest, as £500 winner in Competition No. 1,815 with the homely *Bullet*: WOMAN WITH A WAY—"WHY?" AND "WHOA!", WIFE.

Have *you* a hobby in which you can lose yourself and win prize after prize? If not, look at this week's seventy cheques, with Easter feasts—and begin enjoying *Bullets* this evening.

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As a Bonus Award, a case of luxury Foods accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated April 5, and in JOHN BULL, dated April 12), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

What The World Needs
Gardener John
European Army
Joy Of Spring
In The Grand National
We Understand
Two Bright Eyes
Proudly
Crooks Are Everywhere, So
Too Much Of A Good Thing
Wearing Thin
Auntie's Canary
Taxing His Brains
Marvellous Invention
Roaring
Infant In Arms
On The Roof
Rank Outsider
Sticks And Stones
Trophy Of The Chase

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

Bill From The.....
Japanese .....
Fortunately For .....
If .....Permits
Everything That's .....
The Professor.....And

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,825 (or Xword 777) "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

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FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues XWORD 777

1. Is generally considered of little weight
6. Some public speakers hold the attention of their audience and a few do this
7. At parties, children expect to get
10. Sound of this is typical of English May
11. They get knocked about a lot
14. Any normal person likes to see shining
15. Hubby probably won't feel quite so much at home in this of spring-cleaning

Down Clues

2. Few people really understand this of arms
3. Many a one is unnecessarily squalid
4. Such a person is in many instances too proud to allow you to help him
5. Fancy-dress costume may be marked by this
8. Housewife sometimes has difficulty getting them off
9. After two or three of these, a friend can be left quite fuddled
12. By a succession of statesmanlike steps, Uno may still make the world this
13. You wouldn't be surprised to come upon this in a pub

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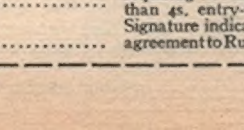

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XWORD 772 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Heel. 3, Gift. 9, Side. 11, Sway. 12, Men. 13, Ait. 14, Sling. DOWN: 1, Heads. 2, Easter. 4, Fort. 5, Cook. 6, Move. 7, Paces. 8, List. 10, Wars.

TWO £100 SHARERS (entries differing at one point only from Competitors' Answers above): Mrs. C. Fielder, 3 Wolseley Terrace, Lydd, Kent; C. F. West, 2 Chapel Row, Ashley, Newmarket.

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638

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T	O	A	S	T	S	■	E	■	D
■	D	■	E	■	7J	■	L	8L	Y
9	■	10B	A	■	■	■	■	■	■
I	C	E	S	■	11	O	O	D	12S
N	O	■	■	13	■	V	I	S	A
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CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
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In adjudication all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated March 29.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

their hands on their bayonets. Two ranks of prisoners waited, tense. The Scot faced the Nip.

"Leave the Aussie alone, you animal," the Argyll said quietly, his left foot still forward and his fists, though only half-clenched, at the ready. On his bare forearm two tattooed hands clasped each other firmly. It was the only friendly thing about that forearm just then. "Leave him alone," he repeated.

The Nip moved, raising a hand slowly to his mouth to wipe it. Then, as he lowered the hand and noticed the blood on his fingers, the stillness broke. He screamed with rage and flung himself at the Argyll. Simultaneously the other guards hurled themselves forward and, before we could move, the youngster was lying broken on the ground.

The episode was over. We carried him back to the jail. We did what we could. There was nothing he could not have had so long as we ourselves had it. He died a few days later.

The Jail Concerts

Wherever there are two or three gathered together who come from the United Kingdom, there you will have song. Listening to the Pommies singing was a favourite pastime with us Australians. Lacking their unself-consciousness about singing, we seldom burst into song ourselves: but we enjoyed listening.

Roused at last by the lamentable absence of our own voices from the nightly sessions, we Australians laid our plans. First we negotiated with the Japanese for a piano which we had seen in one of their brothels. Pianos, we pointed out, were not essential in brothels. Could we have it? Since we could not eat it, or put it on sores, and since they themselves could not play it, they again agreed.

We then started working to put on a show. While all those who had any pretences to a voice practised assiduously, another group of us rehearsed a very vulgar ballet. We rehearsed in the cell set aside for coffin making, but enjoyed ourselves nevertheless.

The concert was staged at one end of the well between the cell floors in the British lines. It was watched with wild enthusiasm by the jail's entire population—including the guards.

To ecstatic cries of "Encore, Encore," the show concluded, and we all sang "God Save the King"—a song in which the Japanese joined with enthusiasm because it, along with "Dinah," seemed to be one of the few Western tunes they knew. From then onwards, once a week, we had concerts after the day's work. They were nights of deep nostalgia, those concert nights. At those moments Pudu Jail seemed a real home.

Off To Singapore

And at this stage, quite unexpectedly, the Nips suddenly announced: "All men go to Singapore." We were not to be shot after all.

So, in November of 1942, we were split up into parties, and left. The Australians were one of the first parties to go. The entire jail fell out to say goodbye. As those who remained for later parties shouted and waved, led by the little padre, we marched out of Pudu's gates for the last time. Carrying our sick, we headed down the long road to the railway station.

We clambered into cattle trucks, thirty or more to a truck. We lay the men with "happy feet" flat on the floor of the truck, then huddled ourselves in what space remained.

The train started. A day and a half later we reached Singapore. There we were driven to Changi—the camp of about 10,000 Allied prisoners of war on the north-eastern tip of the island. The second phase of our p.o.w. life had begun.

NEXT WEEK: Our forced journey through the Thailand jungle

FROM MY FAMILY ALBUM

The photograph on page 26 is of Alicia Markova (then Lilian Alicia Marks) when a child.

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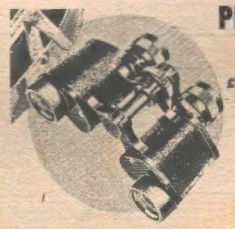

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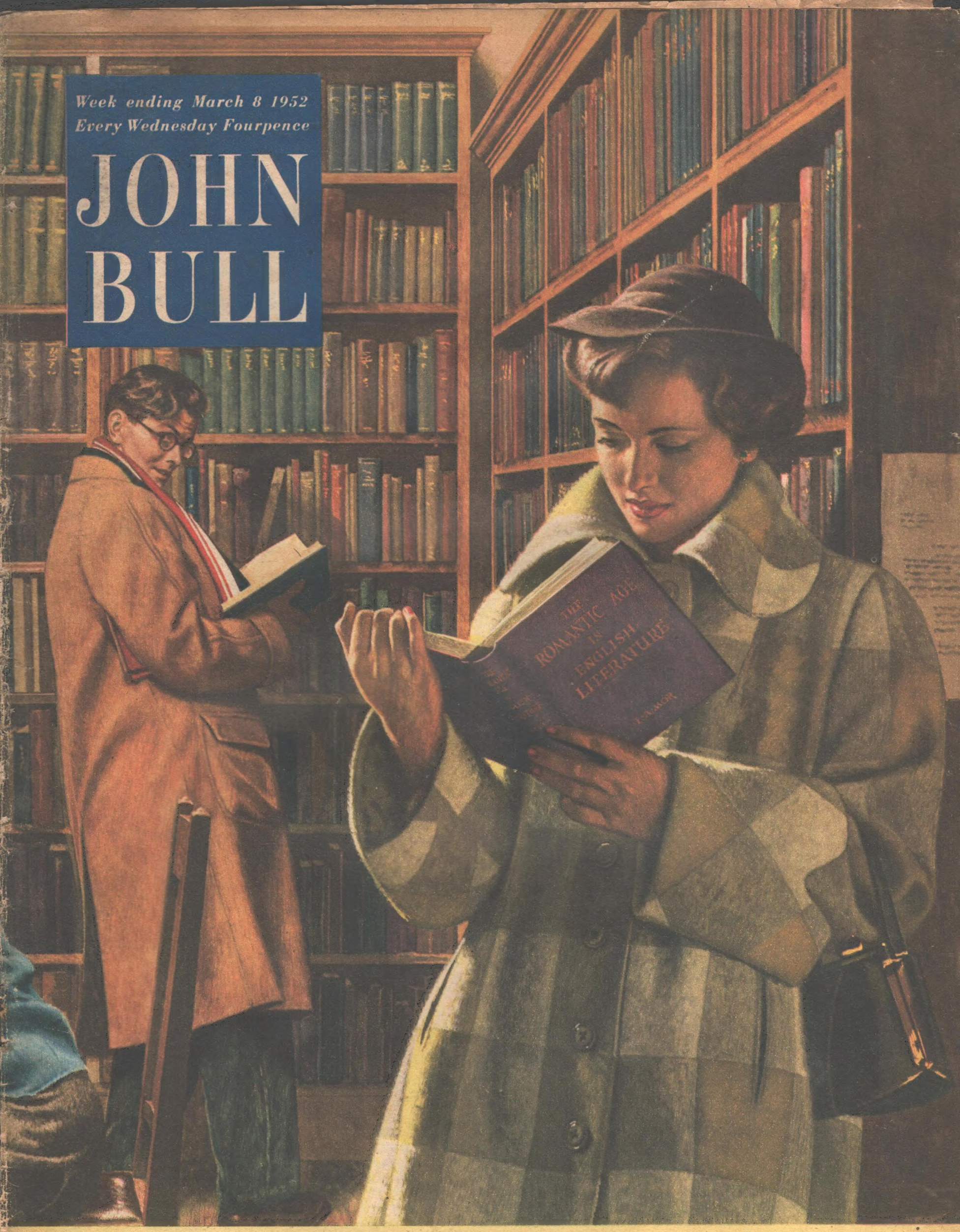

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